

Wordsworth

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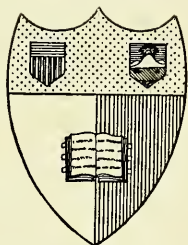
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A Rambler's Note-Book

at the English Lakes

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Rev. Henry Van Dyke
and to all my American
friends I dedicate these
short sketches of a land
they dearly love.
AUTHOR'S DEDICATION.

BY THE REV.

H. D. RAWNSLEY

HONORARY CANON OF CARLISLE

Author of "Literary Associations of the English Lakes," "Life and Nature of the English Lakes," "Memories of the Tennysons," "Ruskin and the English Lakes."

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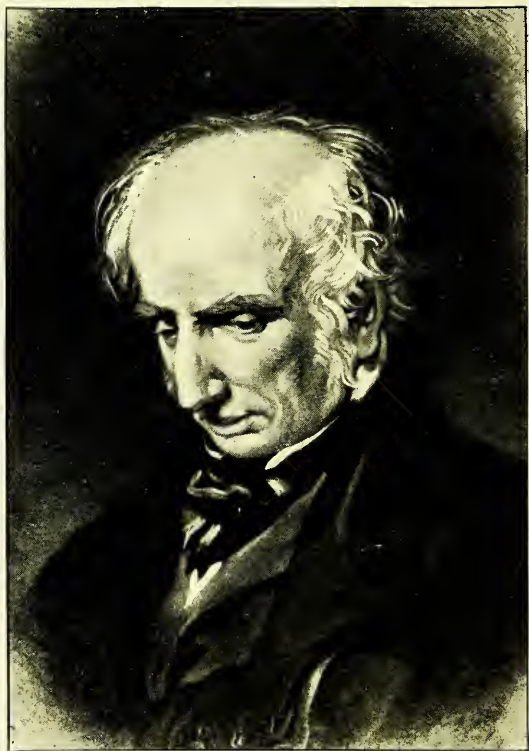
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Literary Associations of the English Lakes

By the Rev.
H. D. Rawnsley
Honorary Canon of Carlisle

In two Volumes
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and the Haunts of Wordsworth

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Illustrations

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LITERARY ASSOCIATIONS OF THE ENGLISH LAKES

CHAPTER I

GREYSTOKE: PENRITH: BROUGHAM CASTLE: KING ARTHUR'S
ROUND TABLE: MAYBOROUGH MOUND: THE
GROTTO: TIRRELL MEETING-HOUSE

LORD CLIFFORD: THE WORDSWORTHS AT PENRITH: ARTHURIAN
LEGEND: WILKINSON AND HIS FRIENDS: DEATH OF
CHARLES GOUGH ON HELVELLYN

INSTEAD of going over the Dunmail Raise to Ambleside by the road over which we shall return to Keswick, let us go thither by another route; we will take train for Penrith, thence we will drive to Pooley Bridge, and so by Ullswater to Patterdale, and over the Kirkstone Pass.

After leaving the station we have a last view of Windy Brow, with its Calvert associations, above the wall of wood on the left. We get a last peep on the right, too, of Chestnut Hill of Shelley memory, and after threading

the echoing defile, and thundering over the bridges of "sinuous Greta," we pass the entrance of the valley which Richardson the poet-schoolmaster loved so well, and Sir Walter Scott made famous, "the narrow valley of St. John," and win the quiet beauty of the "lonely Threlkeld's waste and wood," and the wild swells of Matterdale Common.

Away to our right, beneath Wanthwaite Crag,¹ above the Threlkeld Quarry, lie the remains of the old Pictish village of prehistoric date, and we sight a little further on, a spur of Helvellyn, the Wolf-Crag as it is called, that takes us back to the time when the wolf ravened hereabout. Yonder rising ground to the north-east, beyond Troutbeck Station, preserves to us, possibly, a memory of the days when bears, as well as wolves, prowled round. "Berrier," it is averred, means "the Bear-warrior," so we are taken back to a far distant past, as we speed upon our way.

But our eyes are attracted by the deep-trenched gorges to the left, and the splendid pyramidal-shaped buttress of great Blencathra. There is no mountain side in Cumberland so full of majesty. Its quaint-ridged shoulder, its deep purple-dark clefts, its mottling of wondrous sun and shadow, its glory of wild heather melting into southern-hearted pastures, all combine to bid us gaze, and gaze again. Still more does it appeal to us, because just there, in that old clump of birch and hazel, stood at one time the Hall of "Sir Lancelot Threlkeld," who, as Southey tells us, in his *Colloquies with Sir Thomas*

¹ Perhaps Won-Thwaite or Woden-Thwaite Crag.

More, "after John, Lord Clifford (the Clifford of Shakespeare's drama), was slain at Ferry Bridge,¹ and his lands seized and his property attainted by the triumphant House of York, married his widow, Margaret Brornflett, Baroness Vesey, and was, as the records of the family say, 'a very kind and loving husband to her, helping to conceal her two sons.'"²

The youngest was sent beyond sea, and died while yet a child in the Low Countries. Henry, the elder, who was about six or seven years of age when his father, the "bloody black-faced Lord Clifford," was killed at Dittin-gale, Lady Threlkeld committed to the care of certain shepherds, whose wives had served her, which shepherds and their wives kept him concealed sometimes at Lonsborrow in Yorkshire,—a part of her inheritance,—and sometimes in Cumberland, for the space of four and thirty years. There he was bred up as a shepherd's boy in a very mean condition and thus "miraculously preserved."

With Wordsworth's *Feast of Brougham Castle* in our ears, how can we fail to look with interest upon the fields and hills where the highborn lad, then fourteen years old, passed among the simple dalesmen, as a shepherd's son?

For ten years before the time came when the boy restored to his father's estates, at the bidding of Henry VII.,

¹ He really fell in an engagement which took place a few hours after the battle of Towton Heath at a place called Dittingale in a valley between Towton and Scarthingwell, pierced through the throat by a headless arrow, 29th May, 1461.

² *Southey's Works, Colloquies*, Vol. II., p. 69 seq.

“must part from Mosedale’s groves,
And leave Blencathara’s rugged coves,
And quit the flowers that summer brings
To Glenderamakin’s lofty springs,”¹

the young Clifford, clad in homely hand-spun and “harden-sark,” led a life of simple pastoral employ in this valley; he was not allowed to learn to read or write, lest his proficiency should declare his birth; and though after he came to his own again, his manners were such that “when called to Parliament he behaved nobly and wisely,” he could never do more in the way of writing than sign his name.

Yet had this Clifford mighty teachers. The silence of the mountain pastures, the chiming waterfalls, the echoing winds, morning and noontide, sunset and moonrise, and above all, the nightly gathering of the stars. And such a love of astronomy had he learned in his night watches at the fold, that when he rebuilt his castles in aftertime, he took care to build up Barden Tower, in near neighbourhood of Bolton Priory, “to the end that he might have opportunity to converse with some of the canons of that house who were well versed in astronomy.”

Other teachers than silence, and sound, and solitude, in earth and heaven, had he here who

“kept in lofty place
The wisdom which adversity had bred.”²

Poverty, simplicity, and that noble self-repression which

¹ *Song at the Feast of Brougham Castle*, p. 364. The quotations from Wordsworth, unless specially noted, are taken from the single volume edition of his works. Macmillan & Co. 1888.

² *Idem*, p. 365.

is still a part of our sturdy Cumbrian yeomen of the dales taught him much; but most was he schooled by the tender affection that was shown him by the honest herdsmen, who gave him shelter.

“Love had he found in huts where poor men lie.”¹

He did such honour to these his mentors, that he grew up in grace and favour with the Threlkeld men, so that

“Glad were the vales, and every cottage hearth;
The Shepherd-lord was honoured more and more;
And, ages after he was laid in earth,
‘The good Lord Clifford’ was the name he bore.”²

It is more than 300 years since they bore his body to the tomb; he died on April 23, 1523 (the very day of the month when the poet, who sang of him 274 years after, also fell on sleep), and where he lies no man can tell at this day. But whether his ashes have mingled with the dust of Bolton Abbey, or are blown about the desert moorland of Shap, matters little, for, thanks to the bard, his name still “smells sweet and blossoms in the dust.” To the witchery of Blencathra and its rugged coves, is added the glamour of the shepherd-lord’s young life, and the glory of having inspired in part, in part lent local colour to Wordsworth’s poem, *The Feast of Brougham Castle*.

We steam on over the moorland waste, the bleating of sheep, the cries of the plover in our ears; “Mell Fell,” with its memories of old Jonathan Otley’s geological rambles to our right; to our left, Greystoke Park and Castle, with its reminiscences of the days when the Duke

¹ *Song at the Feast of Brougham Castle*, p. 365.

² *Idem*.

of Norfolk entertained the almost penniless Shelley and his child-wife, where Shelley met, amongst others, his good friend Calvert.

We whirl on our way, but not without a thought of the days when it was given to one Elizabeth Foster to light such a bonfire at Smithfield as will ever keep "Greystoke's" name before our northern minds, and render it precious as the birth-place of our only Cumberland martyr of Reformation times. For she, who at Bonner's command was burnt at the stake with six others in one fire on January 27, 1556, "for not coming to church," was once a little girl in Greystoke village, and worshipped in the old Church there in the hollow.

And now Penrith, the Red Hill of olden time, is reached; as we go down into the town we remember that this is where dwelt Dame Birkett, the first instructress of the poet Wordsworth and Mary Hutchinson, his future wife. In fancy one can meet the children—the long awkward-looking boy with grey eyes, the little dark-haired girl, that "phantom of delight," who afterwards became to the poet "dearer far than human life was dear"—coming hand in hand from the Dame's school, where they had just been practised in reading and spelling. Dame Birkett, a remarkable personage who had taught three generations of the upper classes, principally of the town of Penrith and the neighbourhood, deserves our thanks. Of her, Wordsworth wrote in 1828, "The old dame taught us to read and practised the memory often no doubt by rote, but still the faculty was improved," and it was this improved faculty that enabled the lad to

tackle the tasks his father afterwards set him "in the glad holidays," when long passages of Shakespeare, Milton, and Spenser were to be committed to memory.

We do not know where Mary Hutchinson's father,—a leading tradesman of Penrith, variously styled tobacconist and merchant,—lived; but at least we can correct a mistake for the currency of which De Quincey is to blame, and can assert, after careful search in the Penrith register, at the hands of that trustworthy local archaeologist, Mr. George Watson, that Mary Hutchinson was the daughter of a certain Mary, eldest child of Mr. John Monkhouse, attorney-at-law, and that it is certain that no marriage connections had ever existed between the Hutchinsons or Monkhouses with either Cooksons or Wordsworths. Hence the commonly received idea that Wordsworth married his cousin is proved to be a fable.¹

As for Mr. William Cookson, all that is still traditionally remembered of the worthy mercer who married Dorothy Crackenthorpe, and by her became the father of Wordsworth's mother, is that he was a man who "wore a girt corporaation, sic as was common in those daays but is quite gone out o' fashion noo"; that he had a cousin who was the leading grocer of Penrith, and was also called

¹ Mr. Watson informs me that he has discovered during his search in the Penrith Parish registers, that Dr. Cookson, the poet's uncle, and William Monkhouse, the poet's wife's uncle, both married daughters of Vicar Cowper of Penrith. Hence, though there was no blood relationship at all between Mary Hutchinson and William Wordsworth, there was a slight connection by marriage between branches of the two families that would make intelligible the assertion of De Quincey, that they were cousins, somewhat after the style of Scotch cousinship.

William Cookson; that he was well respected but "hedn't a bit of potry in him," and was a very stern man.

Perhaps that sternness may have been inherited from the William Cookson, "tinkler" or "brazier," who died in 1639, and who had served the office of churchwarden in the Parish Church during the Presbyterian vicariate of Roger Baldwin. It is clear that the son of the said "tinkler" inherited his father's Presbyterian views, for he and his wife Alice were excommunicated for Nonconformity. He too was a "brazier," and died in 1714, leaving it as his last will and testament that "after his interment a decent gravestone should be procured and laid over his body with such inscription as to his executors would seem suitable, for the which purpose he left behind the sum of ten pounds, ten shillings"—the equivalent of £12 to £15 to-day. The executors procured the stone, but of soft sandstone, instead of Lazonby grit, and the result is that no inscription remains to us.

This is the more to be regretted, because the last chance of our discovery, for certainty, of the whereabouts of the grave of Wordsworth's mother, is thus removed. We have to be content with such entries in the parish register as "1748, Jan. 20, Ann, daughter of Mr. Cookson, mercer, baptised"; and, eighteen years later, "John Wordsworth of Cockermouth, bachelor, and Amice Cookson of Penrith, spinster, a minor, Feb. 5, 1766."

We should have wished, after reading the next sad entry, "1778, March 11th, Mrs. Wordsworth, wife of John Wordsworth, Esq. of Cockermouth, aged 30, buried," to have gone out into the churchyard, and, passing Owain

Caesarius' grave, to have looked upon the sacred spot where the mother of a greater giant lies. Alas ! our wish cannot be gratified. The tomb of the mother of Cumberland's greatest poet, of the learned master of Trinity College, Cambridge, and the grandmother of two bishops, must be unvisited ; no man knoweth of her sepulture at this day.

We can see where Mary Hutchinson's mother lies buried. She died in 1783, and a blue slate headstone near the north-west of the tower preserves her name and date as clear as on the day the letters were cut, but which of the four blank sandstone slabs may mark the resting-place of the Cookson family is unknowable.

Nor does one know where Cookson the mercer's shop stood, there, where the "dear, dear sister" Dorothy seems occasionally to have served, till she left Penrith to try school-keeping with an uncle, the rector of Fawcett, in Norfolk. We can, however, visit a square, substantial house, rebuilt since that time, and now the premises of Messrs. Arnison, drapers, that stands in what used to be called Burrowgate, and looks down Devonshire Street, towards the market-place. In the drawing-room of that house the young poet played his dare-devil trick of slashing the thong of his whipping-top whip right through the hooped petticoat in an ancestral lady's portrait ; and in the attic of that house, in a fit of moody petulance, the lad nearly determined on putting an end to himself and his sorrow, at point of foil or rapier, for some indignity he thought he had suffered.

In that house Wordsworth saw, for the last time, through

the open bedroom door, his mother reclining in her easy chair, and the mother's pale face followed him for life.

To that house, the home of crusty, old, unsympathetic grandfather Cookson, the orphan children came, at the death of their father, John Wordsworth, in 1783. And one never passes the place without a sigh, to think of how natures, so sensitive as those of William Wordsworth and his sister Dorothy, must have suffered and sorrowed there. It was well enough when the boys were at home, but when they were away at Cockermouth, tears, that even in the holidays would sometimes fall from brother and sister alike, would come into Dorothy's eyes, and she would doubtless be scolded by the "artificial" old lady of the house, who would beg her to study self-control, and to be more sedulously sedate in bearing and in manner.

Yet the very sorrow of the orphaned Wordsworths there, at Penrith, drew them closer to each other, soul to soul. Poor Dorothy! what poignancy of grief is there in a letter such as that written from the Cookson House in 1787, to her friend, Miss Pollard, afterwards Mrs. John Marshall of Leeds.

"I can bear the ill-nature of all my relations, for the affection of my brothers consoles me in all my griefs. They are so affectionate. . . . William and Christopher are very clever. . . . John, who is to be the sailor, has a most affectionate heart. . . . Richard, the eldest, is equally affectionate and good. . . . Many a time have W., J., and C., and myself shed tears together, tears of the bitterest sorrow. We all of us feel each day the loss we sustained when we were deprived of our

parents; and each day do we receive fresh insults of the most mortifying kind, the insults of servants. . . . Uncle Kit (who is our guardian) cares little for us. . . . We have been told a thousand of times that we are liars. Mortifications to which we are continually subject. . . . W. has a wish to be a lawyer, if his health will permit.”¹

But William went to school, and then to college, and escaped some of Dorothy’s sorrow, and if we had been standing at Christopher Cookson’s shop in October, 1787, we might perchance have seen the long-legged lad, with his sister at his side, waiting proudly and impatiently for the Red Rover coach to bear him up to Cambridge. A regular dandy too, “silk stockings, powdered hair, and all the perquisites.” At least the mercer’s shop had this time befriended him.

Nor was it ill that the Cockermouth lad should know the beauty of the Eden Vale and Eamont’s stream, and the Petrel flashing through the fields to the north. How else should so much “beauty born of murmuring sound” have passed into his verse? How else should he have paid to the river Eden,

“To my life’s neighbour dues of neighbourhood”;²
or have written,

“A weight of awe, not easy to be borne,
Fell suddenly upon my Spirit,—cast
From the dread bosom of the unknown past,
When first I saw that family forlorn,”³

¹ Knight’s *Life of W. Wordsworth*, Vol. I., p. 35.

² *Sonnet to the River Eden*, p. 724.

³ *Sonnet to Long Meg and her Daughters*, p. 725.

those quaint Druid stones at great Saukeld we call Long Meg and her daughters? How else could he have celebrated the Countess' Pillar, or the Hartshorn tree, or known that though

“The forest huge of ancient Caledon
Is but a name; no more is Inglewood,
That swept from hill to hill, from flood to flood”?¹

yet that still to any poet's fancy as he climbs the Beacon hill and gazes out north and south, there are, as there were for the eyes of the young undergraduate Wordsworth in his first vacation of 1788,

“Fair parks spread wide where Adam Bell might deign
With Clym o' the Clough, were they alive again,
To kill for merry feasts their venison.”²

There must have been many marksmen hereabout in the olden time. Every yew tree at our Cumberland farms was planted for the making of the good yew bow. And when Shakespeare in his *Much Ado about Nothing*, Act 1., Scene i., made Benedick protest he never would yield to love with his, “If I do, hang me in a bottle like a cat, and shoot at me; and he that hits me, let him be clapped on the shoulder and called Adam,” he had in mind one of the finest marksmen that ever climbed this Beacon Hill, or wandered in the shades of Inglewood, the Adam Bell of Wordsworth's verse just quoted.

Lovers of archery grow less; the Inglewood forest has faded, but there will never fade from our English literature that stirring ballad, *Adam Bell, Clym o' the Clough*,

¹ *Yarrow Revisited, Inglewood Forest*, p. 699.

² *Idem*.

and William of Cloudeslie. Nor will there pass from our blood for generations, that old Teutonic love of hunting in the merry green wood, which centuries of forest life gave us.

“Merry it was in the grene forest
Among the leves grene,
Wheneas men hunt east and west
Wyth bows and arrows kene.”

Where the outlaws of Inglewood twanged the bow, it is “merry” still, but to-day men can only hunt the fox “from Low Denton side to Scratchmere Scar” to the sound of John Peel’s view halloa, “and his hounds and his horn in the morning.” And none now, save the Lord of Kidsty Pike, can “raise the dere out of his denne” in sight of the Beacon Hill.

Let us leave the little town of the Red Beacon with thoughts of those old days—of our northern Robin Hoods, Adam Bell and Clym o’ the Clough—of the days too when hunting was so good in this wild Inglewood, that Rufus would have his lodge here, some of whose stones may still perhaps be found in that old ruined castle by the station, which the men of “Peneret” obtained a Royal License to build, for the better fortifying of the town in the 20th year of the reign of Edward III. This castle arose in rebuke, after the raiding Scots had reduced the town to ashes; and was sacred once to the White Rose, for Richard, Duke of Gloucester, resided here for five years together, 1452-57, when he was Sheriff of Cumberland, recruiting for the House of York.

Ere we turn to go, we will seek the old parish church

of St. Andrew, from whose red tower the Curfew bell, rung every evening, reminds us still of days long gone by. We will enter and gaze upon the only original portraits, now extant, of the father and mother of two English kings. There, in painted glass, may still be seen the clear-eyed Richard—Richard Plantagenet, Duke of York—and Cicely Nevill, his wife; and after looking at the keen face and double-pointed beard of Richard, we may take our Shakespeare and turn to Part III. of *Henry IV.*, and feel the freshness of that early day fall upon us.

Leaving the church we may gaze upon the Runic crosses and the hogbacked gravestones close by the northern door, and call to mind the fable which archaeologists of the last century accepted in all good faith, how that here a Pagan giant chieftain "Owen Caesarius" by name, was buried with the wild boar rudely sculptured round his grave, because he had rid the neighbourhood of this pest, and himself had perished in a wild boar hunt.

No Pagan lies between those weather-beaten monoliths, and as we look upon this ancient Christian place of burial, our minds go off to the Viking times, when the first Christians met—at the grave of their Christianised chieftain—a saintly preacher of the New Way, and placed those twin trees of stone, their Igdrasils, their holy trees of life, no longer to Balder's honour, but to the glory of Him whose cross they bore, even of Christ their Saviour. Or we may recall earlier times still, the days of the first raising of the cross in this neighbourhood, when Ninian, for whose name and teaching "Nine-Kirks" is our witness, baptised Roman and Pagan convert alike in the waters

of the Eamont, Lowther, or Petril, and, preaching to the well-worshippers of Skirgill, or Clifton, or Dickey Bank, taught the people of a Well that springeth up into everlasting life.

Now, as we stand beside the "Giant's Grave," and dream of that olden day, if we lift our eyes we shall almost certainly see the well-known figure of a somewhat portly man, with plaid over his shoulder, leaning heavily upon his staff, for he is lame, and we shall know by the brow of him that this is Sir Walter Scott, who never would pass this Penrith without dismounting from the coach to gaze at the Giant's Grave.

The brown hair and eyelashes of the bard, that were once so singularly in contrast with his flaxen eyebrows, have become dimmed and grey. And as we talk with him to-day, the light grey eyes that used to flash such twinkling light seem to have lost something of their old force. Yet his face, never regular enough to be called handsome, with its long upper lip, and its towering brow, can still smile with such a cheeriness as makes one gaze and "gaze, and go away possessed of an impression of power, sweetness, and a capacity for pain and joy strangely intermingled.

On this day of August, 1823, Sir Walter, who has just come from Lowther Castle, where he has been with Lockhart, the Wordsworths, and Canning, is *en route* for Rokeby, and he is inquiring if anyone can direct him to the Printer of Coleridge's *Friend*, or to the lodging that the poet and philosopher occupied for a month in 1812, when he came up to collect the types and manu-

script remains of his short-lived journal. Alas ! none can tell Sir Walter, and so he saunters off to climb to the Beacon, to gaze upon the battle-field of 1745, there on Clifton Moor ; or to think with a certain pride of that earlier day of Scotch rebellion in 1715, when the sight of a single Highland bonnet put bishop, and earl, and all the king's men to such rout as prevented them ever being brought together again.

Returning to the street, we may ask for the Liberal Club ; beneath it there once lived the printer Brown, who took great trouble in procuring for Coleridge the type and paper, for the printing of *The Friend*. We can ask for Mr. Cockbaine's in King Street, where, at the sign of the "Robin Hood," Wordsworth stayed in 1794, nursing his friend, the dying Raisley Calvert.

We leave the town that has been, as it well may, the home of many archaeologists, of whom not least in the roll, though latest to pass away from us, was Dr. Taylor. He died in 1892, but he has left behind him a work on the Old Manorial Halls of Westmoreland and Cumberland which will keep his name fresh, and give honour to this neighbourhood for many a long year to come. A century earlier lived here a certain James Clarke, a worthy innkeeper, whose *Survey of the Lakes*, published in 1789, is full of most interesting local history, and is embellished with important maps and plans of the district.

Going now southward by the Plague-stone, "the sign of God's Punishment in Perith," as it was called, by which in 1597-8 no less than 583 persons died, to Eamont (locally Yamont) Bridge, we feel at once back again in the

olden time. Every house has its date upon its door head. There, a worthy foreign weaver who settled here in 1671, tells us in fair Latin that to the brave man every bit of soil is fatherland. Here, the tiny and well-ordered cottages speak of days of faggot voters. Here, a grander house with windows blocked, bespeaks the time of window-tax. The public-houses, too, invite us in quaint doggerel,

“If we be dry
To come and try
The virtue of their honey,”

or urge us to remember that though we rush hastily into the daylight, the night and darkness come apace.

We are tired; let us enter beneath the quaint Latin motto which the keeper of the hostel called the “Welcome to Cumberland,” inscribed over his portal in 1781, but first let us have a good look at the sturdy Highlander on the signboard, who personifies Cumbria’s rugged wild. It looks as if the Englishman who shakes hands with him feels that the Borderland between Scotland and England lies at Eamont Bridge, and, in the fierce old days of border feud, there was colourable excuse for the feeling.

There are ghosts at our side: the dark-eyed De Quincey gazes with us, and soon, whilst his friend and companion Wordsworth saunters on to the bridge to look, as oftentimes of yore he looked with Dorothy, on the majestic wood and towering keep of Brougham Castle—its pleasant fields, and glorious waterflood—we shall hear De Quincey order supper, with some apology, for that it is Sunday evening. If we wait long enough we may hear him persuade his friend, with whom he has this day, Oct. 7, 1807,

walked from Eusemere, to recite again the *White Doe of Rylstone*, just now in manuscript. But supper is over. De Quincey and Wordsworth have left the inn and gone away into the town. We have been dreaming all this while, as we lean on the parapet of Eamont Bridge. —It is but high-noon still, and at our side are standing a youth and girl; they are none other than Wordsworth, the young collegian, and his devoted sister, overjoyed to be again in one another's company, and able again to ramble off to the meadows where Lowther and Eamont meet and swirl to the Eden's stream, again to clamber about the ruins of that "monastic castle 'mid tall trees,"

"Low-standing by the margin of the stream"

that should one day be immortalised in the poem whose opening lines we never can forget :

"High in the breathless Hall the Minstrel sate,
And Emont's murmur mingled with the song."¹

What Cockermouth Castle was to the children, this ruin of Brougham Castle must have been to the growing boy and girl. Wordsworth tells us in his *Prelude* :

"those mouldering towers
Have seen us side by side, when, having clomb
The darksome windings of a broken stair,
And crept along a ridge of fractured wall,
Not without trembling, we in safety looked
Forth from some Gothic window's open space,
And gathered with one mind a rich reward
From the far-stretching landscape, by the light
Of morning beautified, or purple eve."²

¹ *Song at the Feast of Brougham Castle*, p. 363.

² *The Prelude*, Bk. VI., p. 273.

Alas ! the winding stair is too broken for us to attempt the climb, but truly the prospect from that old hoary pile is full of witchery. There is not anywhere in Westmoreland such a scene to conjure up the days of a prehistoric past, as the little tract that lies between the Lowther and the Eamont, at this meeting place of the waters. There, by the side of the road to Ullswater, within its mounded ring, is the green tourney-ground, or place for trial by single combat. It is called Arthur's Round Table, and many a knight of King Arthur's, in the Cymric time, may have hazarded all in combat thereon for himself, his family, or his tribe.

There is a literary association with this green duel plot of Arthur's Table Round which is exceedingly interesting. Most of us have, at one time or another, read the old ballad whose first line Shakespeare puts into the mouth of good Sir John Falstaff :

“When Arthur first at court began, and was approvéd king.”

The ballad details a terrible single combat between Sir Lancelot du Lake and a certain robber chieftain, Torquin by name. Now it chances that tradition has it, that one Torquin, a man of gigantic stature, lived in a den on the banks of this Eamont, still called the Giant's Cave. He harried the land, and robbed the mothers hereabout of their fairest daughters, who were carried off by him and imprisoned in his den. To this cavern, in the end of last century—if we may trust Clarke, the good people of Penrith resorted on the third Sunday of May, carrying with them tea, liquors, etc., and there made merry,

in honour, probably, of the defeat of Torquin at the hands of Sir Lancelot du Lake. The old tradition went that King Arthur, hearing of Torquin's misdeeds, summoned him to court. Torquin refusing, a battle ensued, in which he fell, and was buried in the Penrith Churchyard.

With Arthur's Table Round in front of us, with Pen-dragon Castle not many miles away, with Arthur's Pike above Ullswater, Stone Arthur above Grasmere, with such a line from the *Ballad of the Marriage of Sir Gawaine* in our ears as "King Arthur lives in merry Carlisle," and with Arthuret in our mind, one can well understand that in Cymric days, such a deed of arms as is chronicled in that old ballad may have taken place upon the silent sward we are gazing upon. At any rate, I never pass this spot without a picture of Torquin and Sir Lancelot in the dread moment of the terrible onset, when

"They coucht their spears, their horses ran as tho' there had
been thunder,
And struck them each amidst their shield wherewith they brake
asunder.
Their horses' backs brake under them, the knights were both
astound,
T' avoid their horses they made haste, and light upon the
ground.

.
"They buckled then together so, like unto wild boars rushing,
And with their swords they ran at one another slashing.
The ground besprinkled was with blood, Torquin began to
yield,
For he gave back for weariness and low did bear his shield."

Just beyond, and on the other side of the road, there is

the huge circular rampart of stones that we call Mayborough Mound. This is that amphitheatre wherein may have been gathered the ancient parliament of the northern tribesmen hereabout. Kings may have been crowned, and laws proclaimed, or chieftains buried, or sacrifice offered at "the breaking stone" that still stands silent in the midst.

Close by is a simple and unpretentious house, the Grotto, where lived Wilkinson the poet, Wordsworth's friend. This same Wilkinson wrote, in 1789, a journal of a tour to the Highlands, which Wordsworth borrowed when he, Dorothy, and Coleridge followed the same track in 1803. Wordsworth was so much struck by a passage in that journal—which they used as a kind of guide—that, inspired by it, he wrote the exquisite poem, *The Solitary Highland Reaper*. The sentence in Wilkinson's journal ran thus: "Passed by a female reaping alone and singing in Erse as she bent over her sickle, the sweetest human voice I ever heard; her strains were tenderly melancholy, and felt delicious long after they were no more heard."¹

If that passage of such "beauty and pathos," as Dorothy Wordsworth called it, sank deep into Wordsworth's heart, his lines sink as deeply into ours to-day:

"Whate'er the theme, the Maiden sang
As if her song could have no ending;
I saw her singing at her work,
And o'er the sickle bending;—

¹ *Thomas Wilkinson*, by Mary Carr, p. 6. Reprinted from the *Friends' Quarterly Examiner*.

I listened, motionless and still ;
 And, as I mounted up the hill
 The music in my heart I bore,
 Long after it was heard no more."¹

Now, as we wander along above Eamont's side and gaze down, through the elm-tree screen, upon the river shining and coiling through pleasant fields, we may

"hear the poet sing
 In concord with his river murmuring by";

but it is not only of Wilkinson's own verses, *Eamont Vale*, or *To the Memory of Gough*, or of *Mrs. Elizabeth Smith*, *The Elegy on the Princess Charlotte*, or *On Disturbing a Bird's Nest in his Garden*, or *The Yellow Branch*, that we think; it is rather of that power of poetry within the good man's heart—simple, pathetic, pure—that could, through Wordsworth's lips, give such music to the world. For this man Wilkinson was a true poet in soul. "He was a man," as Wordsworth wrote in his *Excursion*,

"Whom no one could have passed without remark."²

by nature tuned
 And constant disposition of his thoughts
 To sympathy with man, he was alive
 To all that was enjoyed where'er he went,
 And all that was endured."³

Born at Yanwath, in April 1751, of yeoman stock, he lived and died upon the ancestral farm of forty acres, here by Eamont side. With no more schooling than that given by an old dame in the next village, he early

¹ *The Solitary Reaper*, p. 192.

² *The Excursion*, Bk. I., p. 421:

³ *Idem.*, p. 420.

put his heart to school, and found that "Nature never did betray the heart that loved her." As to the good things of this life he wrote, "it was early the earnest wish of my heart to obtain a few friends, men¹ affectionate and intelligent." And one of those few friends was Wordsworth.

"I had lately," he writes to Mrs. Mary Leadbeater of Ballitore, under date Yanwath, 22/11/1799, "a young poet seeing me, who sprung originally from the next village.¹ He has left the college, turned his back on all preferment, and settled down contentedly among our Lakes with his sister and his muse. He is very sober and very amiable, and writes in what he conceives to be the language of Nature in opposition to the finery of our present poetry. He has published two volumes of poems, mostly of the same character. His name is William Wordsworth."² It is evident that Wilkinson copied out and sent the Poem *We are Seven* as a specimen of Wordsworth's work. To this letter Mary Leadbeater, who had lately lost her own sweet little daughter Jane, replies: "The specimen of Wordsworth's poetry thou sent me I could not read without tears, for, ah! 'The first that died was little Jane'; all-powerful Nature never fails to touch the heart."³

To a mind so sympathetic as that of Wilkinson's young Wordsworth's poetry came like a revelation, and drew towards it, with cords of love and admiration, the solitary, simple farmer, with his tender feeling for nature. For Wilkinson lived the ideal life of the man whom

¹ Sockbridge, where Richard Wordsworth, the grandfather of the poet, lived.

² *Thomas Wilkinson*, by Mary Carr, p. 18.

³ *Idem*.

Horace describes as "content to breathe his native air in his own ground"; worked hard with plough and scythe, yet ever heard, as he worked, the music of the winds and streams and birds, and there withal "the sad sweet music of humanity"; employed his leisure hours in writing verse, ordering some new scheme of philanthropy, or, after the manner of Shenstone at his "Leasowes," shaping his garden walks beside the river, and filling his hermitage or arbour with apt quotation in prose or rhyme.

"We have at length," he writes, "some traces of spring (6th of Fourth month, 1784); the primrose under the hedge begins to open her modest flower, the buds begin to swell, and the birds to build; yet we have still a white horizon, the mountain tops resign not their snows. The happiest season of the year with me is now commencing—I mean that in which I am at the plough, my horses pace soberly on before, the larks sing above my head, and the furrow falls at my side, and the face of nature and my own mind seem to wear a sweet and cheerful tranquillity"; then the deep seriousness of the Quaker comes to the front and he adds, "I should be happy, my friend, were it not that I have sometimes to chide myself with a slackness of duty—not much, indeed, to my fellow-creatures, but with a forgetfulness, a falling back from that zeal for the Kingdom with which I am sometimes favoured."

Here is another extract. "Eighth month, 16th, 1789: Yesterday I parted without regret from a close acquaintance—I set by my scythe for this year. I have often this season seen the dark blue mountains before the sun,

and his rising embroider them with gold. I have had many a good sleep in the shade among fragrant grass and refreshing breezes, and though closely engaged in what may be thought heavy work I was sensible of the enjoyments of life with uninterrupted health, for which blessing may I be truly thankful.”¹

These letters are keys to the good man’s manner of life and to the workings of his mind. One does not, surely, wonder that Wordsworth found in Wilkinson a friend, nor that he should have been moved to write of him and of his spade, and have thought pleasurably of both the man and the implement that wrought such transformation in the garden above the Eamont. We all know the lines :

“Spade! with which Wilkinson hath tilled his lands
And shaped these pleasant walks by Emont’s side”;²

fewer of us may know William Wordsworth’s letter written to Wilkinson from Coleorton, at the end of which he says: “On the other page you will find a copy of verses addressed to an implement of yours; they are supposed to have been composed that afternoon when you and I were labouring together in your pleasure-ground—an afternoon I often think of with pleasure, as indeed I do of your beautiful retirement there.”³

In 1806 Wordsworth stayed two days yonder at the Grotto with Wilkinson. Wilkinson tells us, “I had promised Lord Lonsdale to take William Wordsworth to Lowther when he came to see me, but when we arrived

¹ *Thomas Wilkinson*, by Mary Carr, pp. 2, 3.

² *To the Spade of a Friend*, p. 211.

³ *Thomas Wilkinson*, by Mary Carr, p. 24.

at the Castle he was gone to shoot moor-game with Judge Sutton. William and I then returned, and wrought together at a walk I was there then forming; this gave birth to his verses."¹ Doubtless the baldness of that first line, "Spade! with which Wilkinson hath till'd his lands," has often prevented the rest of the poem being read. But the reader who will take the trouble to know something of Wilkinson's life and character, will feel that Wordsworth did most truly describe his friend when he wrote in a following stanza,

"Rare master hast it been thy lot to know;
Long hast Thou served a man to reason true;
Whose life combines the best of high and low,
The labouring many and the resting few;

Health, meekness, ardour, quietness, secure,
And industry of body and of mind."²

These were the qualities that endeared Wilkinson to all who knew him and made and kept him,

"as the greatest only are,
In his simplicity sublime."

As one gazes upon the quiet little house by Eamont side, shaken now by the roar of the steam-god rushing on his way, one remembers how in 1804, when there was a general arming of the inhabitants to repel the Frenchmen, and when four hundred volunteered from the loyal town of Penrith, the tattoo of the drums shook the windows of the Grotto. A general rate was laid on the farms near to support the cavalry; Wilkinson was a man of peace,

¹ *Thomas Wilkinson*, by Mary Carr, p. 23.

² *To the Spade of a Friend*, p. 211.

and for his principle's sake refused to pay. He was busy with his husbandry, but nevertheless allowed both his carts to be seized and to be sold by distraint, and felt as he tells us, "very little disturbed." One gets a glimpse into the good Friend's heart by the account of his interview with the man of war, the distrainer. "I went to see him," says Wilkinson. "He expected a burst of reproach, I felt no such disposition. I said I wanted to talk with him about the late affair, and asked how he had felt in his own mind. He said, 'Very uneasy,' and heartily wished he had never meddled. . . . I told him his acknowledgment did not bespeak a bad disposition; that when wrong was done the next thing was to put things to right, that I was only suffering in property, but he in his character. In short, he has returned one cart, and has suffered ten times as much in mind as I have."¹ This was the mind that nursed its song, and kept its quiet even through stormy times in Eamont Vale.

Not only was Wilkinson a "good quaker," who would now ride on his pony, now walk on foot, his 300 miles to the Yearly Meeting in London, but he espoused the cause of the weak and the distressed wherever he found them. Thus he was at one time found fighting bravely in a case involving the rights of the poor of the village in a matter of manorial fines, and when the enclosing of Yanwath Moor became a question, he took sides warmly against the proposal. He believed the intelligence of the Cumberland and Westmoreland peasantry to be "an advantage and distinction which I would not wish these districts to

¹ *Thomas Wilkinson*, by Mary Carr, pp. 17, 18.

lose, and I believe it is in great measure owing to the small divisions of landed property, and to those who have only a small property a little common-right is a useful auxiliary";¹ so he fought the unsuccessful battle for the safety of Yanwath Moor. Nor was it only the rights of the poor men at his gate he cared for; we find him in 1787 issuing "An Appeal to England on behalf of the Abused Africans," to help Clarkson in the country and Wilberforce in the House of Commons, in their noble endeavours.

In 1792, "Much of my spare time," he writes, "is taken up with the cause of the poor Africans. . . . I was for some time a solitary individual, but some respectable people coming forward, we got a petition sent up from the inhabitants of the neighbourhood with 1450 signatures."² That last-mentioned piece of work drew him into close friendship with Clarkson, the philanthropist who became the historian of the Society of Friends. One cannot look upon the Grotto without sight of that young clergyman, Clarkson, who had renounced his orders, walking and talking earnestly upon the new made path that led to their pleasant "arbour" of communion, the summer-house above the river.

"I have lately had the excellent and benevolent T. Clarkson stay with me, and perhaps we may spend our lives together," writes Wilkinson in 1795. "He has purchased a beautiful situation on our fine Lake of Ullswater, three and a half miles from me. He has from principle declined his profession of a clergyman. He is

¹ *Thomas Wilkinson*, by Mary Carr, p. 29.

² *Idem*, p. 13.

much attached to our Society. During his stay at my house there were at least ten poor families to whose comforts he administered; his benevolence takes in every creature of every kind. He began under my roof and made remarkable progress in an interesting work—a description of our Society, religious establishment, traits of character, etc.”¹

And so while Southey over at Greta Hall was meditating a history of that sect “called in derision Quakers,” here Clarkson had already, in the pauses of his arduous work of freedom for the slave, begun upon it.

“Clarkson, it was an obstinate hill to climb,”²

that hill of Emancipation for the negro, but the pauses and rest here in the quiet home of Wilkinson at Yanwath made the climb more possible.

Other Lake worthies of interest found domicile at the Grotto. Clarkson, in 1795, introduced to Wilkinson’s notice young Charles Lloyd, son of Lloyd the banker. “He is nineteen years of age,” writes Wilkinson, “and is in the counting-house, and has good prospects if he follows that line; but the young man is of a very feeling heart. His soul is harrowed up by the distress incident to large towns.

“He has a poetical turn, writes most beautiful verse. His attachment is to a pastoral life, as most rational and consistent with his own feelings. He would prefer life in the country with £100 a year to £1000 in the town. He

¹ *Thomas Wilkinson*, by Mary Carr, p. 14.

² *To Thomas Clarkson*, p. 361.

is 'a young man of classical education, whose heart incites him to be vigilant on behalf of the poor and to do good.'¹

This was just the kind of heart which would find sympathy with Wilkinson. He too preferred to dwell "remote from city noise." There is an interesting autograph letter in my possession which gives an account of his journey to London, his introduction to Edmund Burke on 19th May, 1791, who, "after a touch of poesy," invited him to accompany him to Westminster Hall to the trial of Warren Hastings. Wilkinson concludes thus: "And now I wish to leave London lest, if I have received any impressions of good, they should wear off." It is plain the mighty Babylon had little attraction for Thomas Wilkinson.

So Charles Lloyd, the friend of Charles Lamb and Coleridge, and afterwards of Wordsworth and Southey, became an inmate in Wilkinson's house at Yanwath, and here in pleasant retirement the young classic found in the meditative yeoman farmer a congenial friend, and in the simple life by Eamont's stream, health of body and of mind.

There were many other visitors here. Martha Howorth; Jacob Thompson, the local painter, who gained from Wilkinson his first encouragement. Bernard Barton, too, whose heart was always in the land of his sires, wished to be his guest if ever he came north. If Wilkinson encouraged Thompson to paint, he certainly also encouraged Barton in his poesy. Indeed, the timorous Barton once owned that it was to Wilkinson's example he was indebted

¹ *Thomas Wilkinson*, by Mary Carr, p. 14.

for courage to decide to print his own poems, with an avowal that he who thus dared to be a poet, was a member of the Society of Friends.

Again, Sir James Graham, come down with Wordsworth from Lowther, calls for converse and finds Wilkinson "shearing": now Canning of "the fine figure" and engaging countenance, *en route* for Keswick on a fine September morning in 1825, begs Wilkinson to guide him by the best ford over the river Eamont. What better ford could there be than the "One Ford," hard by "Yanwath," though they who thus spoke of it had likely enough forgotten that in the olden time it had been called "The gate of the Ford of the Waggon," Wath-wain-yeat? Wilkinson always remembered how on that occasion Canning, having dismounted, remarked approvingly of the parlour, and seeing the bookcase open instantly drew out Bessot's *Life of Burke*.

Now it is Captain Smith who calls, or his wife Juliet, from Patterdale or Tent Lodge, or the accomplished daughters, Bessy and Kitty Smith. Now once again Wordsworth and his sister Dorothy and "dear, dear Coleridge" stay a day or two. Now again Lord Lonsdale enters, promises "fawn skins for your sofa," walks round the croft and is delighted with the improvements which that "spade with which Wilkinson hath tilled his land" has wrought.

"I proposed putting on my shoes if I went further with him," says Wilkinson, speaking of this visit; "but he contended I was better in my clogs, so I accompanied him through Yanwath wood."¹

¹ *Thomas Wilkinson*, by Mary Carr, p. 34.

Not always were the visitors who walked in the Yanwath garden or grounds as sympathetic as Lord Lonsdale; for Wilkinson tells us, "Afterwards came my cousin, to whom I shewed my walks, my garden and all. We passed on in silence, I conjecturing how it would end, when he remarked, 'I had rather have seen a good bullock.' Now do not think," he adds philosophically, "I was out of humour with these remarks, knowing we may each be happy in our own way."¹

His delight in landscape-gardening made Wilkinson a favoured authority far and wide. To-day the rocky path in Lowther park beside the river, and the laying out of the grounds at Tent Lodge, Coniston, are memorials of his taste; and many a clump of aged thorn or oak on the Lowther property owes its preservation to the interest and love of the good Yanwath poet-yeoman.

Nor was Wilkinson sought after only as an authority on such matters. He was asked to select places most suitable for the building of houses with fine prospects. In 1794 he chose for Clarkson, at his request, the house called Eusemere at Pooley Bridge, and selected a house and property in 1800, in Patterdale, for Captain and Juliet Smith, who afterwards, for the sake of the health of their daughters, removed to Coniston. He superintended the building of Eusemere, and the restoring of the leaning tower of Yanwath Hall, close to that picturesque old building by the river bank—one time a seat of the Dudleys—which one almost instinctively

¹ *Thomas Wilkinson*, by Mary Carr, p. 50.



THE FRIENDS MEETING HOUSE, TIRIL.

looks out for close to the London and North-Western railway line, as one leaves Penrith station for the south.

Wilkinson projected roads, one along the south-eastern side of Ullswater on the breast of Place Fell, which he thought would be "a great advantage to those of taste and intelligence." We may not be able to agree with him here, for the footpath is ample accommodation for artists and pedestrians, and serves to preserve in the quietude, which is each year diminished, one little stretch of Fellside scenery "secure from rash assault," but his motive was undeniably beneficent. He wanted "to open communication between the villages, and to employ the poor."

At times this yeoman-poet would be summoned to Lowther Castle to meet a distinguished guest. There he saw Southey, sad for the loss of his son Herbert, in 1816; there too, Prince Leopold, in 1819; there in 1825 he met Sir Walter Scott, and Lockhart and his wife. Well pleased were they to escape for the nonce from the Castle lions, and come down to the sweet simplicities of homely men and minds. Sir Walter gave him kind greeting, and appeared to Wilkinson to be "a plain substantial country gentleman, with so much good humour that his society is truly pleasing. We talked of historians and history, of poets and poetry, of Wordsworth, Southey, Coleridge, and Lord Byron."¹

Go where he would and into whatever society, Wilkinson was a welcome and honoured guest, and a thoughtful conversationalist with the best talkers of his time.

¹ *Thomas Wilkinson*, by Mary Carr, p. 31.

And what did he look like? Mary Leadbeater shall tell us in her poem on the "Art of Being Beloved."

"His hand is hard with toil, his cheek has met
The winter's tempest and the summer's heat.
Spare is the form to action well inured;
Fatigue unshrinking has that form endured.
The garb, the manners, speak a lowly mind
Not to the selfish love of praise inclined,
Yet praise unsought is his; and, praise above,
His the rich meed of universal love."¹

He never married; his sister Barbara, ten years his junior, and still remembered as being anxious to appear ten years younger still, kept his house for him. Blindness came upon him, but he was "still cheerful and a credit to the cause of Truth he had so near his heart"; he felt "the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune" in the way of property losses owing to his having given bond for some who were in need, and whose creditors he must satisfy. Latterly his brain gave way; second childhood came upon him, and he was forced to be rocked asleep as one would rock a child; but ever in those blind and wandering-minded days his talk was of his friends, Lord Lonsdale and Wordsworth and Clarkson. Quietly he fell on sleep on 13th of the 6th month 1836, at the age of 85, and was gathered to his fathers in the little Meeting-House graveyard, at Tirril.

We pass away from Penrith and from Yanwath in the direction of Pooley Bridge; after two or three miles we come to Tirril and turn aside to look upon the little

¹ *Thomas Wilkinson*, by Mary Carr, p. 42.

meeting house beneath "the burnished sycamore" for which Wilkinson had so bravely fought, when the Friends met to consider the enlarging of their house of worship. Wilkinson maintained that it was better to lengthen the meeting-house and preserve the sycamore, rather than raise the roof for gallery accommodation and destroy so goodly a tree.

The opposition gravely said, "he was for preserving *the groves* which Scripture said should be destroyed. Wilkinson, always humorous, rejoined, 'If I am for preserving *the groves*, you are for building up *the high places*.' . . . At length a friend suggested, 'Let us not differ, however, let us show a spirit of condescension.' Immediately the wind fell. . . . I sat down on a grave and wrote out the particulars as they were amicably agreed upon.

"I proposed that we who had horses should cart the materials gratis, and I was willing to convey half myself. I have been forty or fifty days thus employed with my horses and carts. I kept so close to this work of the meeting-house that some, laughing, called me 'Zerubabel.'"¹

But we who think on that good builder's wit and humour, his tender care for the safety of the shady sycamore, may remember that it was "from nature and her overflowing soul" that he received this power to

"Maintain a pure and reverential care
For the unoffending creature whom she loved."

The same hand that defended the sycamore was ready

¹ *Thomas Wilkinson*, by Mary Carr, p. 49.

to help all dumb things that needed succour. When riding through furious sleet and hail upon some mission journey to Edinburgh, whenever Wilkinson heard a helpless lamb abandoned by its mother send up a piteous cry, he got his friend to hold his horse, and, with the hail and sleet beating in his face, endeavoured to restore the little one to its mother. His love for the birds of the air was as great as his care for the beasts of the field. The poem to his Thrushes and Blackbirds deserves quotation not only for its simple sweetness and its genial lovingkindness, but because it interested both Wordsworth and Coleridge, and called forth from the pen of the latter a suggested conclusion.

TO MY THRUSHES AND BLACKBIRDS.

(Some friends having found nine of their nests and looked into them to the annoyance of the inhabitants.)

“ Ye blackbirds and linnets, and finches and all,
No longer sit piping aloof when I call :
You know, my sweet birds, and it’s known to your spouses,
I go not about, peeping into your houses ;
Your green sheltered houses as safe are from me
As if they were locked with a lock and a key ;
How could I annoy you, when seeing your care
In collecting your mortar, your moss, and your hair !
How you tugged at your timbers, and toiled on the wing
While the winds were against you, your rafters to bring !
I once was a builder, nor have I forgot
How I laboured, like you, in erecting my cot ;
I thought, peradventure, like you, as I wrought,
Of a house of my own, and it might cross my thought
That a mate might sit by me and comfort my nest,
And there, in due time, that my chirpers might rest.

I have lived with you all without scolding or strife,
 From the cushat and owl, to the wren and his wife ;
 Round your mansions of moss you may warble all day,
 From the apple-tree bough or the juniper spray,
 Unmolested by me ; I partake of your joy,
 Nor went about robbing your nests when a boy.
 You've often amused a poor head full of care
 With a bounce to the clouds or your tumbles in air ;
 If you sing from the cedar I hear with delight,
 And am ready to laugh when you bustle and fight ;
 I scarce would forbid you the use of my trees
 When you go with my cherries and pilfer my peas ;
 With pleasure I see you display your light pinions,
 And flutter and fly round your little dominions.
 The whole of my garden is open and free,
 Each tree shall be yours, and the boughs of each tree."

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Coleridge, on reading the above, wrote to Thomas Wilkinson :—" Might I venture to suggest these lines, or rather the thought in them, as the conclusion of this very sweet poem ?"—

" But with you, my wild tenants, I enter no suit,
 My sweet fellow bards, fellow gard'ners to boot ;
 At two-thirds of your meal you are doing my work,
 Then to grudge you the rest asks the heart of a Turk.
 Oh ! take without fear your dessert for your wages,
 And still be my trees and trim thick-set your cages !
 S. T. COLERIDGE, 25th May, 1809."

Wordsworth wrote to Thos. Wilkinson from Grasmere :—" Mr. Coleridge showed me a little poem of yours upon your birds, which gave us all very great pleasure."

Here, now, long since gone to dust, lies one of the gentlest hearts that ever beat. We can, as we stand in Tirril graveyard, summon from his sleep the venerable

figure—for Foster Braithwaite, the author of *Salmonidae of Westmoreland*, the Isaac Walton of the North, who attended the Friends' meeting here in June, 1836, describes him thus: "On looking round I was reminded of one who had just passed to a better world—Thomas Wilkinson of Yanwath. This venerable-looking Friend always wore light drab clothes, knee-breeches and shoes, fastened with silver buckles. His hair, silvery white, fell down almost to his shoulders. His countenance was benign and animated, his figure tall and erect."

Braithwaite missed Thomas Wilkinson, but he saw at that, and subsequent meetings, one whose bones now rest in that quiet roadside sleeping place—the celebrated mathematician, John Slee, who, with his son Thomas, was in his day a well-known coach in mathematics for Cambridge undergraduates during vacation time. This John Slee was, so Braithwaite tells us, a striking-looking man, very absent-minded, but famed for the pith and humour of his talk. Walking one day along the road we are travelling, he was accosted by a man who said, "I beg your pardon, sir, this is not the road to Penrith, is it?" Slee stopped, and turning round, looked earnestly at the stranger, and thus addressed him, "Friend, thou first of all tells me a lie, and then asks me if it is true. It is the way to Penrith." He no longer makes pithy replies, he has gone the far journey and lies in silence now; but we can read his name, and his son's name, upon the stone above his grave, and wish that by this habit of marking them, the quiet cells wherein the Quaker forefathers slept had all been thus identifiable.

Somewhere, not far off, but undistinguishable, for there is no stone to mark it, rests one of whom the Quaker poet of the Eamont Vale sang a sweet memorial song. For here lies Charles Gough, the lover of our hills and dales, who perished in an April hail-storm, 1805, by losing his way on Striding Edge, and falling to his death from the Red Cove Crag down towards the Red Tarn. His body, wasted to a skeleton, was found three months afterwards; and the faithful vigil and fidelity of the little Irish terrier, Foxey, that had watched and waited by her master, and had sacrificed even her natural love for her young ones rather than desert his remains, have been chronicled by masters of song. Wilkinson described the incident thus:

“When Gough looked upward from sweet Patterdale,
He saw the clouds beyond Helvellyn sail;
To the blue lake he saw the Gold-rill wind,
But left the Gold-rill and the lake behind.
His dog, a true companion day by day
Through fern, through heath, through rushes, led the way.”

Gough falls over the fearful steep, and his faithful dog follows him, and paces round the poor body—

“Then at his feet his weary head he laid,
Moan’d in his sleep, and till the morning stay’d.
Thus pass’d the nights; and when the rosy dawn
On Swirrel’s rocks and Striden’s horrors shone,
To his dead lord the faithful servant crept,
Pull’d his damp robe, and wonder’d why he slept.”¹

There is a strength and pathos of simple narrative

¹ *Thomas Wilkinson*, by Mary Carr, p. 35.

about the last couplet which we may compare with Sir Walter's :

“How long didst thou think that his silence was slumber?

When the wind waved his garment, how oft didst thou start?”¹

But it is best to hear the sad story in Wilkinson's prose, and by the kindness of his grand-niece this is possible. Mrs. Carr, Wilkinson's loving biographer, writes :

“I find in the correspondence of Wilkinson a letter which is dated Yanwath, 30th of Eighth month 1805, which contains a brief notice of the pathetic incident. It is valuable as having been written only a short time after it occurred. It is as follows :

“First I shall mention to thee an affecting interment that took place lately in our graveyard at Tirril. 'Twas of the bare skeleton of a young man of the name of Gough (Charles Gough) of Manchester, a relation of the Goughs of Ireland, who, fourteen weeks ago, had fallen from the heights of Helvellyn (one of the highest mountains in Westmoreland), down a precipice 600 feet high.

“He had attained the summit of the mountain (where his staff was found) in his passage out of our parish to another valley, but it was apprehended the mist had struck in, and he had fallen down as just described. His bones were bleached white though covered with his clothes, and his skull was separated and found at a distance from the rest. His pocket-book, with his Disownment therein for becoming a volunteer, being shown to Thomas Clark-

¹ Scott's Poems, *Helvellyn*.

son¹ as he was passing the village whither they were bringing his remains, led to the discovery who he was. His faithful little dog had attended his relics between three and four months, but how it had subsisted itself is difficult to suppose, though it appeared to the people who collected his remains that it eat grass.’”

Not least interesting is this letter, as proof beyond doubt that the poor little much maligned terrier did not eat her master. The bones were found whole and undisturbed within the poor man’s garments, *pace* to the contrary, that rough jester, “Christopher North,” and his story of the “Red Tarn Club,” of ravens who were fabled to have set to work upon the Quaker’s drab and suit of duffle grey.

But if it appeared to the people who collected Gough’s remains that the little guardian “had eat grass”; to our shepherds to-day, it appears that she sustained strength for her vigil—though not enough for the giving of food to her own little ones born to her during her faithful watching—by such carrion mutton as is found in abundance among the fellside precipices, and in the mountain ghylls. We are not sorry that the credit of the little Irish terrier’s faithfulness has been established in part by the simple chronicle of kind old Quaker Wilkinson.

¹ Thomas Clarkson was living at the time at Eusemere, on the side of Ullswater. I have heard that he was the person who conveyed the remains down to Tirril for interment.

CHAPTER II

BARTON CHURCH-YARD : DACRE : POOLEY BRIDGE : EUSE-
MERE : ULLSWATER : PATTERNDALE : KIRKSTONE PASS

THE DACRES : COLERIDGE : WILSON : GRAY : CLARKSON : WORDS-
WORTH'S POEM ON THE DAFFODILS : DESCRIPTION OF
KIRKSTONE PASS IN "THE EXCURSION"

WE leave Tirril and go on toward Pooley Bridge; yonder to the right, the paved causeway leads to Barton Church. The first rector of that old church of St. Michael's whereof we have record, was a certain William de Sockbridge in the year of grace 1304; but Sockbridge, a little hamlet one mile distant—we passed just now the village lane that leads to it on the right hand at the entrance to Tirril—has in these later times given a greater William to the World. For it was to Sockbridge that a certain Yorkshire yeoman, Richard Wordsworth, came from Peniston. There, when Receiver-General of the County, did he reside; bravely and carefully, when the rebels visited this part in 1745, did he hide his moneybags in some far Patterdale glen, and died honoured for

his integrity and trust in the year 1762. The grandson of this Richard was William Wordsworth. Richard, and perhaps others of the poet's ancestors, lie in the Barton Churchyard. If Barton may, as is asserted, mean the "Bard's town," they seem to have a kind of natural right to lie there, for the music of that family must surely have been flowing on unheard, unvoiced, till in William the singer the voice spoke, and our England listened.

We hie on, and soon a peep of Dacre, or "Dacor" as Bede spells it, and Dacre Castle is obtainable, where, according to William of Malmesbury, Constantine, King of the Scots, and Eugenius, King of Cumberland, put themselves under the protection of Athelstan, King of England, A.D. 927. As we think upon English kings, our mind reverts to that ancient family seat of Hutton John away over the hill, which seems to have given a friend to another English king, in a certain famous Father John Huddleston, who, at the death of Charles II., heard from the dying king these words of thanks, "You have saved me twice; first my body after the fight of Worcester, and now my soul." It was this Father Huddleston who at Boscobel was the chief means of converting the king to the Romish Faith.

But it is with literary not religious associations we are dealing, and that old Dacre with its eastern tale of English daring brings to mind how Sir Walter Scott has put on record the deeds of daring of the men who, taking their title from the east, set their seal to it by their castle-hold here in the west. Who has not read of how on the 9th September, 1514, Lord Dacre

wheeled round the right wing of the army, which he commanded, with such a dash as to fall upon the rear of the Scots, and win for himself honour, and for England, Flodden Field?

“ Lord Dacre’s bill-men were at hand :
A hardy race, on Irthing bred,
With kirtles white, and crosses red,
Array’d beneath the banner tall,
That stream’d o’er Acre’s conquer’d wall ;
And minstrels, as they march’d in order,
Played, ‘ Noble Lord Dacre, he dwells on the Border.’ ”

Ay and he dwelt here also,—“ From this wild country to the fight, went Dacre with his horsemen light.”

Had this been February 15, 1809, and the day worn on to eventide as we go towards Pooley Bridge, we might have met a man limping in pain towards Penrith. On that day Coleridge, who had determined to publish in mid-April a paper that really appeared in June, had set out joyfully for Penrith, for he had heard that given a fount of “small pica” and a supply of stamped paper, young Mr. John Brown of Penrith was both able and willing to be his printer and publisher. The paper was *The Friend*, a literary, moral, and political paper, not excluding personal and party politics, and the events of the day. “In consequence,” to quote Coleridge’s own words to his friend ‘Stuart,’ “on Sunday I walked from Grasmere over the mountains (oh Heaven what a journey) hither, and arrived at last *limping*, having sprained my knee leaping a brook and slipping on the opposite bank, twisted my leg outward. However I am perfectly satisfied with Brown’s character,

proposals, and capability, and have accordingly agreed with him to be my printer and publisher."

Or, if we had been here in January of 1816, we should have been hallooed at by a great broad-chested man without a hat on, also limping a bit from his late severe fall, Wilson of Elleray, who having tired of the coach at Penrith is walking through all weather determined to take dinner with Coleridge at Pooley Bridge, and push on thence to Dobson's House of call at Patterdale.

"I started," says he, "again for Patterdale, against the ineffectual remonstrances of the whole family, who all prophesied immediate death. The night was not dark, and in two hours I was seated in the kitchen of Mr. Dobson at a good fire."¹ But the Professor still felt as bold and chivalrous as he had felt after dinner at Pooley Bridge, and to continue his story, "I then proposed crossing Kirkstone, when shrieks arose from every quarter, and I then found that a young man had just been brought in *dead*, having been lost on Sunday evening coming from Ambleside, and only found that day."²

It was well for the Professor that that melancholy accident made him give up all thoughts of pursuing his journey till daylight, for the next day, though he found the road passable, he found also that the snow in some parts was ten feet deep, and on his way he "walked over two gates."

¹ *Life of Christopher North*, by Mrs. Gordon, Vol. I., p. 207.

² *Idem*.

And now we have gained Pooley Bridge where is no longer any eight-oared pinnace with its twelve brass swivel guns such as was, by kind permission of the Earl of Surrey, one hundred years ago at the disposal of the tourist. A steamer has displaced the bright-jerseyed-and-capped oarsmen who did the honours of their craft at two shillings a day per man, and took free of charge enough powder with them to wake all the echoes on the lake. A steam whistle must serve the echo-hunter in place of swivel-gun, and it is for us to say if we will steam up the lake to Patterdale, or wander on afoot by the ancient British hill-fortress of Dun Mallard through the woods of "the wicked of Watermillock," by the daffodils of Gowbarrow Park, and the legend-haunted Aira Force and Lylph Tower.

The Watermillock folk no longer go nutting on Sunday, and have forfeited right to the proverb that still survives; but their chapel which used to stand by the lake has made way for the New Kirk, and lovers of English literature may be interested to know that it has a curious association with 'the spacious times of Great Elizabeth.' For Bishop Oglethorpe, on his journey to the coronation of Queen Bess, queen of the fairest time our English literature has known, turned aside hither to consecrate that New Kirk in 1588, and men of learning have arisen from among "the wicked of Watermillock." Queen's College, Oxford, owes one of its Provosts to this lakeland hamlet, for here was born in 1700, Dr. John Brown.

That ancient fortress-hill of Dunmallard or Dunmallet

has a ring of the Dunmail Raise about it. And if we need some elegy for those who fought and fell on sleep in the sad old battle days, or those who fought the devil on the height, Benedictine monk or gentle nun, and entered rest long years ago, we had best make friends of the master writer of elegies, the poet Gray, who is climbing yonder for the view. This is the account he wrote in his *Journal* of what he saw on "a pleasant grave day," under date Oct. 1, 1769.

"A gray autumnal day, air perfectly calm and gentle. Went to see Ulzwater . . . approached Dunmallet, a fine pointed hill, covered with wood planted by old Mr. Hassle before mentioned (the builder of Dalemain), who lives always at home—[think of this ye absentee landlords!] and delights in planting. Walked over a spongy meadow or two, and began to mount the hill through a broad and straight green alley among the trees, and with some toil gained the summit. From hence saw the lake open directly at my feet majestic in its calmness, clear and smooth as a blue mirror, with winding shores and low points of land covered with green inclosures, white farm-houses looking out among the trees, and cattle feeding. The water is almost everywhere bordered with cultivated lands gently sloping upwards till they reach the foot of the mountains which rise very rude and awful with their broken tops upon either hand; directly in front, at better than three miles' distance, Place Fell, one of the bravest among them, pushes its bold broad breast into the midst of the lake and forces

it to alter its course, forming first a large bay to the left, and then bending to the right.”¹

Let us descend Dunmallet as Gray descended, “by a side avenue only not perpendicular.” But instead of walking four miles along the western border of the lake, and then returning to Penrith, as Gray did, without having seen the beauty of Patterdale, let us first cross Pooley Bridge, see the view from the eastern shore, and then go forward up the valley.

We are anxious to visit Eusemere, the seat as we know of that worthy Thomas Clarkson of whom Southey once said, that “his name would hold an honourable place in the history of England”; who *began* the discussion concerning the slave trade in this country, and who by the indefatigable and prodigious exertions which he made, well-nigh ruined his health and his fortunes.

Of this father of the cause of freedom for the slave, no one who visits Pooley Bridge and looks across Ullswater to the white house on the eastern shore, but must think tenderly and gratefully,—proudly too,—that he found in the society of these hills a strength to stimulate and inspire him and his able wife with courage for the uphill task which he, “Duty’s intrepid liegeman,” “starting in his fervent prime,” first to “lead forth that enterprise sublime,” dared for God and for humanity.

What a fair place for a view this Eusemere is! Well, indeed, did the worthy bard of Eamont Vale choose for

¹ *Gray’s Works*, ed. by E. Gosse. *Journal in the Lakes*, Vol. I., pp. 250, 251.

his friend. One does not much wonder at finding such an entry as this in Wilkinson's Journal: "He"—Sir Walter Scott—"thought Eusemere the finest situation he had seen, I told him I had chosen it for Thomas Clarkson."¹ Nor does one marvel, that when, through the delicate health of his wife, Clarkson was obliged to leave Eusemere for the South of England, he should write, as he did, to Wilkinson in 1806, "My heart is still in Westmoreland, and I long to be among the mountains again. I do not mean on a visit, but to live and die there; though now I must strain every nerve for the Total Abolition, which if once accomplished, I shall think of returning to private life."²

And how happy and benevolent a private life that small portion of it was, here beneath these Westmoreland skies, we gather from a note of Wilkinson's: "Clarkson is very busy with his husbandry and humanity. He has been begging round the neighbourhood for a poor man who had lost his cows."³

We are indebted to the one time lady of this house, Mrs. Clarkson, a woman "of superior understanding," as Southey called her, for a letter dated Bury, April 22, 1812, which led to the discovery of Coleridge's whereabouts in that unhappy year of quarrels with his Grasmere friends.

Writing to Henry Crabbe Robinson, she says, "It appears that C. has been living for the last month at a house in Penrith. The Morgans had written to Keswick

¹ *Thomas Wilkinson*, by Mary Carr, p. 31.

² *Idem*, p. 14.

³ *Idem*, p. 15.

to enquire after him ; the bookseller had written enquiring after him to come up with 'The Friend.' His picture was wanted for the Exhibition, in short there was a complete hue and cry after him. At last Southey wrote to Mr. Harrison of Penrith and was informed that he was there."

But all who remember that it was Henry Crabbe Robinson that reconciled the two poets, who, from 1810 to 1817, owing to a misunderstanding, forgot that there had been a time when "sooth these two were each to the other dear," and now

"Stood apart, the scars remaining
Like cliffs that have been rent asunder,"

must feel a kind of enthusiasm for the gentle dame, Catherine Clarkson, who helped Robinson in his determination to be a mediator. The touching letters are still preserved to us, in which she spoke of the breach, and told of the pity and sympathy for Coleridge that she felt, and the determination she had come to, to do all in her power to effect a reunion between the Wordsworth and Coleridge households.

"My path is clear before me. . . . Whenever the opportunity occurs I will seek him (S. T. C.) out, soothe him with kindness greater than woman's—the kindness, the compassion of angels when they pity human frailty. Now," she naïvely adds, "you must consider this as a figure of speech, it looks as if I thought myself an angel!"

But one remembers how the writer of that letter was as full of humour and fun as she was of sympathy. When Wordsworth and his wife and Dorothy were staying here in January, 1802, she kept the whole party alive by

stories of her family and of persons she had met. One of them Dorothy remembered. It was of a clergyman and his wife whom Mrs. Clarkson had known, and who, on the slender income of a curacy, brought up ten children, sent two sons to college, and left £1000 when he died. The wife was very generous, gave food and drink to all poor people. She had a passion for feeding animals; she killed a pig with feeding it over much, and when it was dead she said, "To be sure it's a great loss, but I thank God it did not die 'clemmed.'"

We may, as we stand upon the lawn before the house at Eusemere, people it with the well-known figures of Lord Lonsdale, Wilkinson, Scott, Coleridge, De Quincey. The last named came hither on Saturday, November 3, 1807, with Wordsworth, by moonlight, on a horse mysteriously provided for him at the Patterdale Inn, for which he felt he owed payment to the day of his death. "All I remember is," he wrote, "that through those most romantic woods and rocks of Stybarrow—through those silent glens of Glencoin and Glenridding—through that most romantic of parks, then belonging to the Duke of Norfolk, viz., Gowbarrow Park—we saw alternately, for four miles, the most grotesque and the most awful spectacles.

‘Abbey windows

With Moorish temples of the Hindoos,’

all fantastic, all as unreal and shadowy as the moonlight which created them. Whilst at every angle of the road broad gleams come upwards of Ullswater, stretching for nine miles northward, but, fortunately for its effect, broken

with three watery chambers of almost equal length, and rarely visible at once. At the foot of the lake, in a house called Eusemere, we passed the night, having accomplished about twenty-two miles only in our day's walking and riding.

"The next day, Wordsworth and I, leaving at Eusemere the rest of our party, spent the morning in roaming through the woods of Lowther, and, towards evening, we dined together at Eamont Bridge, one mile short of Penrith. Afterwards we walked to Penrith."¹

De Quincey was *en route* to Greta Hall to be introduced to Southey, and that pilgrimage was ever memorable to him because that, on the Sunday after his stay at Eusemere, as Wordsworth rambled on through the Lowther woods, he read to him, for the first time, *The White Doe of Rylstone*.

But, as one stands upon the Eusemere lawn, one can think of other moonlight walks, and other wanderers to their rest beside the mere beneath this hospitable roof-tree. Dorothy Wordsworth, in her Grasmere Journal, under date Monday, 5th March, 1802, has written:—"We came to Eusemere (from Keswick), Coleridge walked with us to Threlkeld."² On the following Monday she writes from Eusemere—

"The ground covered with snow. Walked to T. Wilkinson's (at Yanwath), and sent for letters. The woman brought me one from William and Mary. It

¹ *De Quincey's Works*, ed. by Professor Masson. "Literary Reminiscences," Vol. II., p. 310.

² *Life of Wordsworth*, by Professor Knight, Vol. I., p. 303.

was a sharp, windy night. Thomas Wilkinson came with me to Barton, and questioned me like a catechiser all the way. Every question was like the snapping of a little thread about my heart. I was so full of thought of my half-read letter and other things." (Poor Dorothy, those other things "haunted her like a passion.") "I was glad when he left me. Then I had time to look at the moon while I was thinking my own thoughts. The moon travelled through the clouds, tinging them yellow as she passed along, with two stars near her, one larger than the other. These stars grew and diminished as they passed from or went into the clouds."¹ What a close observer of things in heaven and things on earth Dorothy was!

The next day her brother William joined her at Eusemere, and they went home together. Not for the first time had they made that homeward journey along the Lakeside. For one reads in the same Journal, under date Saturday, January 23, 1802, how she had left Eusemere at 10 o'clock in the morning, riding pillion fashion behind William, with Clarkson alongside on his Galloway. It too was a dark day of wind and storm. "We dined in Grisdale," she says. . . . "We struggled with the wind,—the way was often difficult over the snow."² Yet nevertheless, so good was William's knowledge of the Grisedale Pass that they ascended, and though they once lost their way in the mist and sleet, and were "afraid of being bewildered in the mists till the darkness should

¹*Life of Wordsworth*, by Professor Knight, Vol. I., p. 303.

²*Idem*, p. 287.

overtake us"; though they missed sight of the Tarn when close to it, and were long before they knew they were in the right track; they, eventually, thanks to William's skill and guided by the heaps of stones our shepherds pile for landmarks in winter time, hit on the right path, and were soon siting by "the half-kitchen and half-parlour fire at Dove Cottage,"¹ talking about Lakeland and feeling that they were happy.

Now let us away from Eusemere, and, reaching the Lake, let us, for the wind is boisterous, sit down to rest under a furze bush opposite Clarkson's house. Dorothy and her brother are with us; it is April 15, 1802. "The hawthorns are black and green, the birches here and there greenish, but there is yet more of purple to be seen on the twigs. We got over into a field to avoid some cows—people working. A few primroses by the roadside,—woodsorrel flower, the anemone, scentless violets, strawberries, and that starry yellow flower that Mrs. C. calls pilewort"² (Lesser Celandine, the "*Ranunculus Ficaria*" of the botanist.)

We have passed Watermillock. That quaint wayside home, of late years the Vicarage, now a Temperance Hotel, by the side of the road, was once the temporary home of Mr. John Marshall who had been attracted to this country in the second decade of this century by his love of its natural beauty, and who left the Haweswater moorland to build a house on the banks of Ullswater. We shall catch a glimpse presently of Halsteads, which became in after years the

¹ *Life of Wordsworth*, Vol. I., p. 288.

² *Idem*, p. 304.

seat of Mr. William Marshall the member for Carlisle. When Mr. John Marshall, Carlyle's friend, whom he speaks of as "the great Leeds linen manufacturer, an excellent and opulent man," took up his abode at Halsteads, he can hardly have foreseen that his example would have been so followed by his descendants, or that his family name would have sounded on over all the hills and meres of Lakeland. But the love of natural scenery seems to have run in the family. One cannot go by Halsteads, without remembering that the wife of its owner—that "excellent and opulent man" still remembered hereabout for his practical judgment and clear-headedness,—was the school-girl friend of Dorothy Wordsworth. To Miss Jane Pollard, Dorothy went in times of girlish sorrow, and of womanly perplexity, for comfort and for advice. Blessings on Halsteads for the friendship between that remarkable pair !

We have entered Gowbarrow Park, and going forward still in the woods beyond we see a few daffodils close to the water-side. Dorothy's Journal shall describe the sights she saw there ninety years ago, just as we see them to-day. Thus speaks the Diary :

"We fancied that the sea"—she means the waves of the Lake—"had floated the seeds ashore, and that the little colony had so sprung up. But as we went along there were more and yet more, and at last, under the boughs of the trees, we saw that there was a long belt of them along the shore, about the breadth of a country turnpike road. I never saw daffodils so beautiful. They

grew among the mossy stones about and above them; some rested their heads upon these stones, as on a pillow, for weariness; and the rest tossed and reeled and danced, and seemed as if they verily laughed with the wind, that blew upon them over the lake: they looked so gay, ever glancing, ever changing. . . . The bays were stormy and we heard the waves at different distances, and in the middle of the water like the sea.”¹

The sight of the belt of daffodils on that day enriched our literature. The eyes of poet and poetess, and the heart of a poet’s wife, joined in the making of the daffodil song that we shall never let die :

“ I wandered lonely as a cloud
That floats on high o’er vales and hills,
When all at once I saw a crowd,
A host, of golden daffodils ;
Beside the lake, beneath the trees,
Fluttering and dancing in the breeze.

“ The waves beside them danced ; but they
Out-did the sparkling waves in glee :
A poet could not but be gay,
In such a jocund company :
I gazed—and gazed—but little thought
What wealth the show to me had brought :

“ For oft, when on my couch I lie
In vacant or in pensive mood,
They flash upon that inward eye
Which is the bliss of solitude ;
And then my heart with pleasure fills,
And dances with the daffodils.”²

¹ *Life of Wordsworth*, Vol. I., p. 304.

² *The Daffodils*, *Poems*, p. 205.

The poet in his head-note says, "The two best lines in it are by Mary"; and in a letter to Troughear, he details how in answer to a taunt that "This poem was a fine morsel for the reviewers," he had replied, "There are two lines in that little poem which, if thoroughly felt, would annihilate nine tenths of the reviews of the kingdom, as they would find no readers"; the lines alluded to were these,

"They flash upon that inward eye
Which is the bliss of solitude."

But after all, Montagu's friend Butler was right; that poem, *The Daffodils*, was a fine morsel for the reviewers of the time. Here is an example of one of them. Miss Seward, an authority in those days, writing to Sir Walter Scott in the August of the year that the poem was published, said—"Surely Wordsworth must be mad as was ever the poet Lee. Those volumes of his, which you were so good as to give me, have excited, by turns, my tenderness and warm admiration, my contemptuous astonishment and disgust. The two latter rose to their utmost height while I read about his dancing daffodils, ten thousand, as he says, in high dance in the breeze beside the river, whose waves dance with them, and the poet's heart, we are told, danced too. Then he proceeds to say that in the hours of pensive or of fancied contemplation, these same capering flowers flash on his memory, and his heart, losing its cares, dances with them again.

"Surely if his worst foe had chosen to caricature this too egotistic manufacturer of metaphysic importance upon

trivial themes, he could not have done it more effectually."¹

The Daffodil poem has outlived the reviewers and outlived Miss Seward's criticism; as long as the star clusters shine in Gowbarrow Park, or in the woods beyond it, along "the margin of the bay," the traveller in mid-April will think of Dorothy Wordsworth and those eyes she lent her brother in their happy homeward walk, will remember too that gentle gracious presence, "the being breathing thoughtful breath," whom De Quincey has described as in "a quiescent, reposing, meditative way appearing always to have a genial enjoyment from her own thoughts. . . . Mary Wordsworth."² The daffodils since that day have spread along the shore and may be found in Gowbarrow Park as well as beyond it.

We shall do well to linger in this park, not alone for sight of daffodils and browsing deer, but also for the sad music that comes from Aira Force.

We can climb thither and see, as the poet saw, to the winds'

"gentle touch how sensitive
Is the light ash ! that, pendent from the brow
Of yon dim cave, in seeming silence makes
A soft eye-music of slow-waving boughs,
Powerful almost as vocal harmony
To stay the wanderer's steps and soothe his thoughts."³

But those who, having gazed at Aira Force, pass back by Lylph's Tower after rain, will hear the music of the

¹ *Letters of Anna Seward*, Vol. VI., p. 366.

² *De Quincey's Works*, "Literary Reminiscences," Vol. II., p. 236.

³ *Airey Force Valley, Poems*, p. 78o.

waterfall, very sad and solemn in its sound, as it flows down to the lake, and will easily understand how Wordsworth could weave into a pathetic ballad, the simple incident of the servant girl who walked in her sleep, and startled Glover the artist, by the scream she gave as her bare feet touched the cold flagstones of the kitchen floor :

“List, ye who pass by Lyulph’s Tower
At eve ; how softly then
Doth Aira-force, that torrent hoarse,
Speak from the woody glen !
Fit music for a solemn vale !
And holier seems the ground
To him who catches on the gale
The spirit of a mournful tale,
Embodied in the sound.”¹

Yes, listen I pray you ! for sad is the tale of Lyulph’s Tower, that ancient hold that takes its name from the first baron of Greystoke, he who received his lands from the great Cumberland Earl Meschines—if old “Speed” be right. It tells how Lyulph, the first great lord of the “Wolf’s water,” came hither and built this lodge in the wilderness, that he might find “freedom for thought and freedom from his foes” ; and how on a visit to the Bishop of Durham in 1080 he won such honour by his prudence and his sense that he won also the jealousy of the bishop’s chaplain, and was cruelly done to death. His death caused in turn that of his innocent host, the Bishop, who was slain at the altar in revenge, by Lyulph’s friend.

¹ *The Somnambulist*, p. 726.

We might, after that walk with Dorothy and William, have rested at the inn at Patterdale—probably “Dobson’s” house of call where poor Gough rested, ere full of hope he climbed the Striding Edge to fall headlong, alas! and die by the Red Tarn side.

But one thinks of other people of note who stayed at that little inn in Patterdale that same year. Thither in 1803 came Walter Scott and his wife, and Wordsworth and Humphrey Davy joined them, that for Gough’s sake they might ascend by the Red Tarn to Helvellyn’s top, on their way to Grasmere for a short sojourn.

Now it chanced that on that same day there arrived before Wordsworth and Davy, four lady travellers *en route* to Wilkinson’s of Yanwath; Elizabeth Smith and her sister, Smeaton’s daughter, Mary Dixon of Fell-foot, and a friend. The sequel of the story shall be told in Wilkinson’s own words, merely premising that Wilkinson had mistaken Davy for Walter Scott.

“It was the height of the tourist season, and the Inn was crowded. These four females were in possession, as their sitting room, of the apartment where two tourists (William Wordsworth and Walter Scott)—(or Davy?)—were to sleep in beds spread on the floor. They were ignorant of this arrangement, and held their citadel till half-past twelve at night, notwithstanding our two bards continued making their advances under their windows, proclaiming the time of night, as the watchmen in London, “eleven o’clock!” then, “half-past eleven!” then “twelve o’clock!” before they resigned it. This was every way provoking, for M. Dixon was on her

way to Scotland to be introduced to Sir Walter Scott, yet they both slept under the same roof at Patterdale, and were not aware of it for some time after.”¹

We proceed upon our journey, yet not before we have gone back to have one last look at the glory of Ullswater, as revealed to us on a bright April morning, such as Dorothy and William knew here in 1802, when, as she tells us, Friday, 16th April (Good Friday): “I undrew the curtains in the morning, I was much affected by the beauty of the prospect, and the change. The sun shone, the wind had passed away, the hills looked cheerful, the river was very bright as it flowed into the lake.”²

We go on to the little churchyard, gaze sadly on the remnants of that prostrate yew tree in the churchyard, that fell in 1883, after its centuries of storms, in the wind that shattered the “fraternal four of Borrowdale”; and think of the good St. Patrick, who in the fifth century came hither, and in fancy we hear the preacher, in his hooded gown and leathern girdle, plead with the wild children of this valley to leave their Druid altar and their groves, and turn unto the living God.

Thence by his well we pass, and drink a cup of cold water to his memory, who died as long ago as March 17th, A.D. 464, “having put all serpents ’neath his feet, but the dark serpent Death.” As we look across the lake from Stybarrow Crag, we remember the transaction by which that cottage under Place Fell became the poet

¹ *Thomas Wilkinson*, by Mary Carr, pp. 21, 22.

² *Life of Wordsworth*, Vol. I., p. 305.

Wordsworth's—though never entered on as his domicile. We feel that the benevolence of Lord Lonsdale and his gracious act, in anticipating Wordsworth's wish by purchasing, through Thomas Wilkinson, this property at a price far in advance of its value, did something to atone for the sorrow and beggary which a former unscrupulous earl had thrust upon his steward, Wordsworth's father, by refusing to pay just debts amounting to £10,000, incurred in election expenses on his, the employer's behalf.

And who are these two in such earnest converse seated on the mossy stones at the foot of the crag? The woman is repeating aloud a poem of Browning's. The man ten years her senior, sad and serious of face, waits till the close, and then plunges, with sweet flexible voice, into some deep metaphysical discourse which the poem has hinted at. They are lovers; if you had been here yesterday, you might have seen him come from the Quarry Bank with his *In Memoriam* in hand, to escort the lady of the lovely face to the "dear brook in Patterdale Hall grounds" and thence to their "Point Perfection on Glenridding Dod," or to some fair shaded knoll overhanging a lake-like bend of the river, looking up Hartsop Dod, or by the favourite birch in Deepdale. He is William Smith the poet and mystic, and that lady with him is Lucy Cumming the poetess, whom he met two years ago at Keswick. Patterdale seems haunted with memories of the wooing of those happy lovers. If you go up the Grasmere bridle-road at morn, if you lean on Grisedale Bridge at even, you

will meet them. But more often on any moon-light August night, if you chance to roam into the Patterdale Churchyard, you will find them there.

On the 28th of August, in 1858, wrote Lucy Smith in her story of their love: "A lovely day and a lovely night—we stood side by side leaning against the low wall of the churchyard, watching the moon rise behind Place Fell, herself to-day unseen. She threw her light on the soft clouds that took warm colour of inexpressible beauty. I never see those tints without remembering that evening, even through all the happy 'seeing together' of after years. We stood silent and I cannot remember what was said, only he whispered: 'We shall never forget each other now.' Then came the sad words, 'but I am as powerless to alter my destiny as to lift that church.' That I fully accepted his love more than sufficed."

We leave them dreaming. Dorothy's voice and Wordsworth's, murmuring out a line or two of his Daffodil poem already begun, brings us to our senses, and we go back from 1858 to 1802.

Wordsworth stops his murmuring to gaze upon the wild deer passing by, then falls to discussion with Dorothy as to whether people who do not or will not use their eyes will understand him, if, in his endeavour to paint the trouble and agitation of the waves and flowers, he omits any mention of the reflection of the flowers by the lake side; "you see," says he, "it is impossible that flowers shall be reflected except momentarily, and in a broken manner, in ruffled water. I must be precise;

The waves beside them danced ; but they
Outdid the sparkling waves in glee :

I trust it will not be misread, and that my intention will not be misunderstood."

Poor Wordsworth, he found he had been misunderstood ; the critics who called his *Daffodils* "A poem on Daffodils reflected in the water," omitted to note that he spoke of a breeze, and then laughed at him for his want of observation. So we find him writing to Sir George Beaumont,

"Beneath the trees
Ten thousand dancing in the breeze ;
The waves *beside them* danced, but they
Out-did the *sparkling waves* in glee.

Can expression be more distinct? And let me ask your friend (the critic) how it is possible for flowers to be *reflected* in water where there are *waves*? They may, indeed, in *still* water ; but the very object of my poem is the trouble or agitation, both of the flowers and the water—my poems must be more nearly looked at. Why, let the poet first consult his own heart, as I have done, and leave the rest to posterity, to, I hope, an improving posterity. . . . Every great poet is a teacher : I wish either to be considered as a teacher, or as nothing."¹ We may say Amen to this indignant out-burst, and now, leaving behind the Gowbarrow daffodils, let us continue our walk towards Kirkstone.

We pass the churchyard beloved of Hartley Coleridge—he wrote, it is asserted, an epitaph for one of the

¹ *Life of Wordsworth*, Vol. II., pp. 95, 96.

tombstones—pass the homely inn where one of the oldest inhabitants told me he had “yance met lile Hartley and heard him mak fun o’ Wadsworth’s Pet Lamb over a pint of yäl.” On by the “woody knols” and “fairy village in the vale,” on by the river winding to the lake, “not in a bustle, but not slowly” either; by the three-arched bridge “with a pleasing look of ancientry in the architecture of it, wherefrom the fisher loves to throw his line”; on by the cottages with groups of trees upon the side of the hills, till we gain the next bridge of single span. Here we may rest and watch the water “swirled into arches by the great stones breaking its current into two streams”; or see the “frightened sheep plunge through the flood and stumble to the bank,” its fleece dripping not gold, it is true, but “a glittering shower of silver from under its belly”; and we may fill our hands with primroses by the wayside, where the celandine “shines like starry gold in the sun, where violets, strawberries peep, retired and half-buried in the grass.”

Now we are at the foot of Brothers’ Water. We leave Wordsworth seated on the bridge to write his poem,¹ and will go along with Dorothy by the path on the right side of the lake through the wood; presently we shall hear her repeating the verses her brother wrote four days ago, as he rode homeward through the storm between Middleham and Barnard Castle. It is not a great poem truly, and deservedly, after its first publication in 1807, dropped out of sight till Professor Knight

¹ *Among all Lovely Things*, p. 171.

gave it back to the world in his Variorum Edition of 1854. But it is consecrated by the love of a brother for a sister, and as Dorothy murmuring out the verses passes along the starry flowered path, or leans over the gate and feels that she can stay and gaze for ever, one does not wonder her brother described his Lucy thus :

“Among all lovely things my Love had been ;
Had noted well the stars, all flowers that grew
About her home.”¹

Let us rouse her from her reverie and pass back under the boughs of the bare old trees and by the one grey cottage, along that exquisitely beautiful path ; we shall find her brother William on the grey bridge where we left him, meditating on his poem, descriptive of the sights and sounds he was seeing and hearing there at the foot of Brothers' Water, on that bright Good Friday morning, April 16, 1802. With what like eye and ear the happy poet-couple saw and heard, may best be realised by reading Dorothy's account of what she saw and heard that day, and then comparing with her prose account her brother's poem. “There was,” says she, “the gentle flowing of the stream, the glittering, lively lake, green fields without a living creature to be seen on them ; behind us, a flat pasture with forty-two cattle feeding ; to our left, the road leading to the hamlet. No smoke there, the sun shone on the bare roofs. The people were at work ploughing, harrowing and sowing, . . . a dog barking now and then, cocks crowing, birds twittering, the snow in patches at the top of the highest hills, yellow palms, purple and green twigs

¹ *Among all Lovely Things*, Poems, p. 171.

on the birches, ashes with their glittering spikes, stems quite bare. The hawthorn a bright green, with black stems under the oak. The moss of the oak glossy.”¹

This is her brother’s version of the same scene:—

“The Cock is crowing,
The stream is flowing,
The small birds twitter,
The lake doth glitter,
The green field sleeps in the sun ;
The oldest and youngest
Are at work with the strongest ;
The cattle are grazing,
Their heads never raising ;
There are forty feeding like one !

“Like an army defeated
The snow hath retreated,
And now doth fare ill
On the top of the bare hill ;
The Ploughboy is whooping—anon-anon :
There’s joy in the mountains ;
There’s life in the fountains ;
Small clouds are sailing,
Blue sky prevailing ;
The rain is over and gone !”²

How much to Dorothy’s mind was that line “There’s life in the fountains” may be gathered from the next passage in her descriptive Journal. “We went on. . . . William finished his poem before we got to the foot of Kirkstone. There were hundreds of cattle in the vale. The walk up Kirkstone was very interesting. The beck among the rocks were all alive.”³ Now as we journey

¹ *Life of Wordsworth*, Vol. I., p. 306.

² *Written in March*, Poems, p. 172.

³ *Life of Wordsworth*, Vol. I., p. 306.

along the lake edge of this "Brodda" or "Brothers'" water, our eyes are caught up from the Dovedale valley crag above Hartsop Hall to the Hartsop crags, for there are wondrous goings on in cloudland. Mist of April rain mixed with a storm-wreath of cloud on which the sun pours all the colours of a rainbow, and flashing above the tumult here and there dark pinnacles of shining crag against the blue. Wordsworth's eyes have seen it and he has, as readers of the second book of the *Excursion* know, given us in verse, strong as Milton's trumpet blew, his impression of the scene, suddenly made plain through a rift in the mist. It was here he viewed that

"unimaginable sight !

Clouds, mists, streams, watery rocks and emerald turf,
Clouds of all tincture, rocks and sapphire sky,
Confused, commingled, mutually inflamed,
Molten together, and composing thus,
Each lost in each, that marvellous array
Of temple, palace, citadel, and huge
Fantastic pomp of structure without name,
In fleecy folds voluminous, enwrapped.
Right in the midst.¹

We have reached the top of the Pass. Wordsworth points out to Dorothy "the little mossy streamlet which he had before loved, when he saw its light green track in the driven snow." And it is worth our while, as we sit silent and listen

"While the coarse rushes, to the sweeping breeze,
Sigh forth their ancient melodies !" ²

¹ *The Excursion*, Bk. II., Poems, p. 439.

² *The Pass of Kirkstone*, p. 567.

or in imagination hear the shrill war-horns on the blast

“When, through this Height’s inverted arch
Rome’s earliest legion passed !—”¹

to remember how very deep in the poet’s heart the beauty of that April scene of Kirkstone Pass sank ; and how this streamlet’s joy ran for years in “the strong current of his mind,” who wrote in 1817 :

“Who comes not hither ne’er shall know
How beautiful the world below ;
Nor can he guess how lightly leaps
The brook adown the rocky steeps.”²

Dorothy in her Journal continues : “The view above Ambleside was very beautiful. There we sate and looked down on the green vale. We watched the crows at little distance from us become white or silver as they flew in the sunshine, and when they went still further, they looked like shapes of water passing over the green fields.”³

But the scene changes ; years pass by. Other travellers are at our side as we wonder at

“This block—and yon, whose church-like frame
Gives to this savage Pass its name.”⁴

We hear the somewhat shrill voice of De Quincey, who has been walking up the Pass behind the cart, the common farmer’s cart of the country, with bracken in its bottom, that is carrying the whole of the Dove Cottage Family, except the two children, back to Eusemere, whence they

¹ *The Pass of Kirkstone*, p. 567.

² *Idem.*

³ *Life of Wordsworth*, Vol. I., p. 300.

⁴ *The Pass of Kirkstone*, p. 567.

have just come. "This massive church," says De Quincey, pointing to the Kirkstone, "has a peculiarly fine effect in this wild situation, which leaves so far below the tumults of the world. The phantom church by suggestion; the phantom and evanescent image of a congregation where never congregation met; of the pealing organ where never sound was heard, except of wild natural notes, or else of the wind rushing through these mighty gates of everlasting rock, serves, by its fanciful image of populous life that accompanies the traveller on his road, to bring out the antagonist feeling of intense and awful solitude which is the natural and presiding sentiment—the *religio loci*—that broods for ever over the romantic Pass." But the cart with its driver, "a bonnie young woman of the vale," seated upon the shafts, and Dorothy and William added to its burden, rumbles down towards Patterdale, and we are left alone to think of the many minds to whom this solemn and impressive Pass has ministered thought and happiness.

Hither, on January 9, 1803, did Coleridge adventure in the storm which might well have been his death, and feel, for all the howling wind and tempest, "that love of joy no bodily pain could eat out of him," that love of joy which he tells us "was so substantially a part of him towards hills, and rocks, and steep waters."

Here, on August 24, 1825, stood Scott and Lockhart, to have one last look backward at the land of Christopher North, ere, with Wordsworth at their side, and Dora riding her pony behind them, the cavalcade, bound for Lowther Castle, descended the hill. One cannot be lonely at this

Gate of Dreams. Bright angel presences are at our side,
and, in the words of the poet of the Kirkstone Pass,

“Hope, pointing to the cultured plain,
Carols like a shepherd boy :
And who is she?—Can that be Joy !
Who, with a sunbeam for her guide,
Smoothly skims the meadows wide ;
While Faith, from yonder opening cloud,
To hill and vale proclaims aloud,
‘Whate’er the weak may dread, the wicked dare,
Thy lot, O man, is good, thy portion fair !’”¹

¹ *The Pass of Kirkstone*, Poems, p. 567.

CHAPTER III

WINDERMERE AND ELLERAY

JOHN WILSON (CHRISTOPHER NORTH) AND HIS FRIENDS

WORDSWORTH'S country lies all before us. Let us then, in imagination, enter Lakeland from the south, *en route* for Keswick and Southey-land, by way of Windermere, Ambleside, Rydal, and Grasmere. Not by the "causeways," no longer "bad," that so jolted Scott and Lockhart when they made their pilgrimage to Windermere in 1825, nor by the railway, that moved Wordsworth to such passionate protest in 1844, but by the smooth water-way of Lake Windermere. Whoever refuses to enter by that water-gate misses much of the joy of a first impression of Westmoreland scenery. We have left the town of Ulph the Dane, with its lighthouse monument to the local worthy, Sir John Barrow, the naval hydrographer. We have gained Lakeside. If we care to know how Wordsworth's poetry influenced and refined the life of a simple yeoman's son and filled it with perpetual benison, we shall be tempted to make an expedition hence into the beautiful Winster valley, and visit Borderside where

between 1848 and '56 dwelt the tender-hearted naturalist, philosopher, and poet William Pearson. If we are interested in the painters of the English Lakes, we shall go aside to visit the grave of young Talbot, one of John Ruskin's most devoted and most promising pupils, who perished by cold caught in the act of putting on record some of the wondrous snow effects of our fair winter land. He lies in the Finsthwaite churchyard.

Why is it we are so deaf to the call of artist and poet alike, to come hither at the time of year which is the best for mountain beauty? "Come in winter!" Southey would say. "Come in autumn!" Wordsworth would cry. "The months of September and October (particularly October)," writes the Rydal poet, "are generally attended with much finer weather; and the scenery is then beyond comparison more diversified, more splendid, more beautiful."¹

But we would say, let the traveller come hither in January, when the roads and lanes run between russet hedges of the red beech leaf, or between walls that are mottled green and silver from ground to coping with lichen and rich moss. Let him come in February, when the purple bloom is on the alder-bud, and the tassels of the hazel are first out-hung, and the copses are still warm with the ruddy leafage of the oak. Let him wander into Westmoreland in March and April, when the blood of the new life is flushing the birch bark, or the lemon glow of the first awakening to spring is seen in the larchen grove, and he will feel that green summer is, with all its

¹ *Wordsworth's Poetical Works*, Knight's Edition, Vol. VIII., p. 265. *Guide to the Lakes*.

beauty, less fair upon our hills and vales than autumn gold or winter whiteness, than spring clad in February russet or in March purple.

But to-day is August 20, 1825; we intend to meet Sir Walter Scott and Lockhart at the White Lion at Bowness, for Scott has come across from Ireland to stay a day or two at "Christopher North's" new house up at Elleray, and to be fêted in company with Canning the Home Secretary, by Mr. Bolton at Storrs. That is Storrs on the left there, an hotel to-day. It was there that Canning years ago, overdone with Parliamentary work, looking ill, jaded and fatigued, resolutely tried the water cure, much to Lockhart's amazement, who could not understand Canning's abstinence, and evidently believed that if he would but have taken a little wine he would have "proved a man," and have made it impossible for Wordsworth to remark after dinner, that "Canning seemed to have no mind at all." "It is," wrote Lockhart, "terrible odds, Champagne against Seltzer."¹

Now we are at Bowness; it is Sunday, August 21, 1825. Here is Sir Walter and the "girt yaller-haired" Professor, his locks flying in the wind, his neckerchief anyhow. They have just been listening to what Lockhart calls "a bad sermon," but then the old glass from the Cistercian Abbey of Furness, and the quaint bits of lettering of catechism seen through the white-wash upon the walls, and the fact that this ancient house of prayer is dedicated to St. Martin the soldier saint, and may have been originally planted by Ninian, Martin's disciple, in the 5th century, when he sent forth his missionaries from the "Candida Casa" of Whithorn

¹ Cf. *Scott's Familiar Letters*, Vol. II., pp. 337, 339, 340.

there, on the Solway shore;—all this soon puts the bad sermon out of their heads, and they stroll off contentedly enough for luncheon at Calgarth.

Ere they go, Sir Walter will visit the grave of Bishop Watson of Calgarth, that kindly old prelate of Llandaff who gave Sir Walter welcome when he visited the English Lakes in 1805. We who stand by the Bishop's grave to-day can think of him who rests beneath in kindlier mood than could the Quarterly Reviewer who thought it proper, on the publication of the Bishop's autobiography, to write—"It is our office to pronounce upon the evidence now before us, on his own intrepid exhibition of himself; and sorry are we to say that in point of self-ignorance, vanity, rancour, and disappointed ambition, united with great original ability, our country, more various in its combinations of intellect and temper than any other, has produced nothing similar or second to it since the example of Swift; and for the quiet of this Church and State, or rather for the sake of human nature, we sincerely and devoutly wish that it may never be our lot to animadvert on a third."

This Bishop of Llandaff, who flourished between 1737 and 1816, was, as De Quincey tells us, "a joyous, jovial and cordial host";¹ the cock-fighters of his day knew nothing merrier than his sons' "mains" at Calgarth, and the man who, going up to Cambridge from Heversham village school, whereof his father was for forty years master, with little knowledge except a sound grounding in mathematics, could win the Professorship of Chemistry "without one

¹ *De Quincey's Works*, ed. by Professor Masson—"Literary Reminiscences"—Vol. II., p. 198.

iota of chemical knowledge, up to the hour when he gained it";¹ and then determined to play the same feat with the Royal Chair of Divinity, must have been a remarkable man ! Chemistry has made great strides since then. The Bishop probably never dreamed of Professor Dewar and his solidified air.

Standing with Sir Walter by the Bishop's grave to-day, and looking at the epitaph, "Ricardi Watson Episcopi Llandinensis cineribus sacrum, obiit July 1, A.D. 1816, ætate sua 72," let us rather speak of him as Gibbon spoke, as of a man who "wielded a keen and well-tempered weapon, whose thoughts were expressed with spirit, and that spirit always tempered with politeness and moderation; the most candid of adversaries; whom I should be happy to call my friend, and should not blush to call my antagonist."

As we saunter down to the boat-landing, Scott is full of the story of "Robin the Devil," who once made the island opposite, Isola Bella of Winandermere, famous for tale of moss-trooper's assault and madcap Sabbath ride from thence to Kendal Church; or of that Sire de Courcy who became in 1235 Lord of the Lady's Holme opposite, by his marriage with the last heiress of the Lyndsay family. And Scott is, anxious to know the story of that

"third small Island where survives
In solitude the ruins of a shrine
Once to Our Lady dedicate, and served
Daily with chaunted rites."²

¹ *De Quincey's Works*, ed. by Professor Masson—"Literary Reminiscences"—Vol. II., p. 195.

² *The Prelude*, Bk. II., p. 244.

Then he begs for all information about the weird "Crier of Claife," whose wailing ghost was laid as long as ivy should be green, by the priests who served the chapel on this little island of St. Mary's, but whose voice is still heard by the ferryman of the Nab. The old story too of the skulls at the ancient hall, "Calgarth" or "Kalegarths," in the late Bishop's estate, has fascination for him. He keeps repeating half aloud the curse upon her murderer, which was pronounced in the Court House by Dorothy, wife of Kraster Cook, who had been so falsely condemned to death by the machinations of a later Ahab among magistrates, Myles Philipson. "Guard thyself, Myles Philipson, thou mayest think thou hast managed grandly, but that tiny plot of garden ground will be the dearest ever bought. Time shall be that no Philipson shall own an acre, and while Calgarth walls shall stand, we will haunt it night and day."

As the company reaches the landing place, Mr. Bolton arrives with Canning and his wife, and at once agrees to take the party by boat to Calgarth. Scott is bent on further inquiry about the skulls "that brayed and burned would still return again"; and Canning requests that as they pass thither they may be allowed to land and see Rayrigg, where William Wilberforce, "the mercurial mannikin," as they jestingly call him, spent such happy days during the Parliamentary recesses. They may poke their fun as they please. It is true that Wilberforce only scaled eight stones four pounds; good articles are often packed in small compass, and the weight of his argument and his will sufficed, when thrown into the scale of the judgment of a nation thoroughly alive to its duty, to break the fetters from the

slave, and let those in captivity go free. Nor is there any wonder that Canning should wish to see Rayrigg, for Pitt had often told him of the glory of the view from the lawn as described to him by Wilberforce, and Pitt had often sadly enough added, "but you know I never could accept Wilberforce's invitation." So it is agreed that to-morrow, before the regatta, the party shall row to Rayrigg, by the islands of prayer and meditation, of which Wilberforce wrote in 1788, "I never enjoyed the country more than during this visit, when in the early morning I used to row out alone, and find an oratory under one of the woody islands in the middle of the Lake."¹

"Well we will go to Calgarth by Rayrigg to-morrow," cries Wilson, "but I warn you, gentlemen, that unless you land and walk up the hilly part of the road at the back of the house, you will miss a magnificent view which may only be compared to the hanging gardens of Babylon. There is to be seen thence the widest breadth of water, the richest foreground of wood, and the most magnificent background of mountain, not only of Westmoreland, but, believe me, in all the world." Strong words from the Professor, but then such a Professor in knowledge of his Westmoreland scenery had a right to use strong words.

We will return to Storrs in the afternoon, and stroll out to see the view which Sir Walter, writing therefrom, described thus:—"Here is this beautiful lake lying before me, as still as a mirror, reflecting all the hills and trees as distinctly as if they were drawn on its

¹ *Life of W. Wilberforce*, by his Sons, Vol. I., p. 180.

surface with a pencil.”¹ As to dinner, we have Sir Walter’s word for it, that the venison and claret were of the best, not to mention champagne, somewhat rarer than it is now, which was as sparkling as were the fine dark eyes of that French-looking lady, Mrs. Canning, and as was the brilliant talk of pleasant Lady Bentinck.² Wordsworth is there too, as much astonished at Canning’s languor and silence as Lockhart was at Canning’s use of Seltzer, and inclined to be a bit preachy on his own particular text, “Poetry and Morals.”

But one cannot help feeling that Scott and Lockhart, have not quite recovered from the effect of the “crossing” from Ireland; a little bilious both of them still. Else it would have been impossible for Lockhart, writing home the same week, to have described Wordsworth as “old and pompous, and fine, absurdly arrogant beyond conception, evidently thinks Canning and Scott together not worth his thumb.”³ Nor would Scott have written to his daughter-in-law, that “Wordsworth was much the worse for wear, and looked so old that he felt he must be getting old himself.”

But all dinners come to an end, and away to Bowness, late in the evening, rowed the Professor of Elleray and his distinguished guests, the former with determination to be up with the lark. For to-morrow, Monday, is to be the regatta in honour of the “great unknown,” the Wizard of the North; “Christopher North,” as Lord High Admiral of Windermere, has determined that all the rowing boats

¹ *Scott’s Familiar Letters*, Vol. II., p. 338.

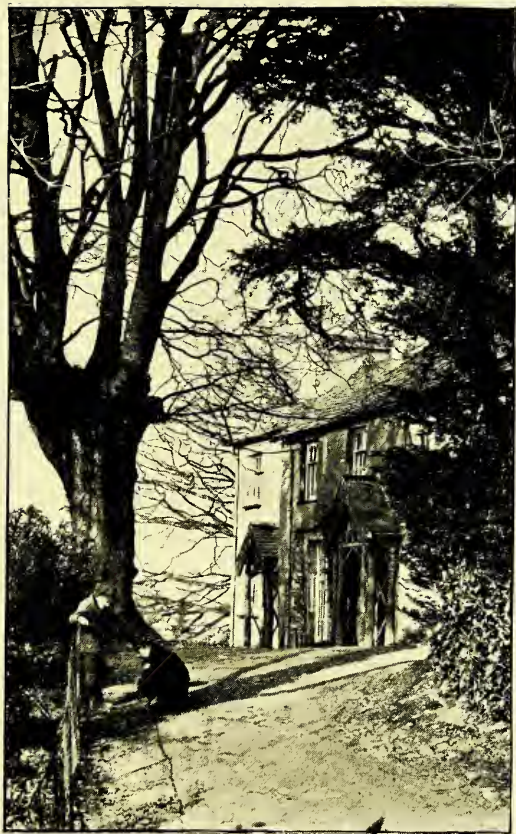
² Cf. *Scott’s Familiar Letters*, Vol. II., p. 337.

³ *Idem*, 336.

on the lake—then thirty-five or forty in number—shall be dressed in bunting, and shall assemble after luncheon in Bowness Bay. There, with all the available music in the district, two scratch bands, headed by the Elleray barge full of Wilsons, Pennys, and Watsons, and presided over by Mrs. Wilson, in “grand turban and flying streamers,” the procession will pass down to Storrs. There Mr. Bolton will bring off his boat-load of Poetry and Statesmanship.

Three cheers will be given as Scott and Canning and Wordsworth join the flotilla, and away under the Admiral’s command will go the whole gay water-party snaking in and out of the bays, and rowing round the islands for the space of three hours or more, with cheerings of spectators from various points of the shore and “fluffings off” of small cannon by way of salute. And as for the bands, they are to play whatever they can and like, so only that they cease not from their lilting. The Professor is determined that the great Singer of the North shall have music wherever he goes. That the programme was carried out to the letter on this eventful 22nd of August, 1825, we know. The day was calm and sunny, and “the sight,” says Sir Walter, “was altogether really a beautiful one, gay and elegant, and very new to us.”

Distance lent enchantment to the memorable scene, for Lockhart in less bilious mood thus described it afterwards:—“There was a ‘high discourse,’” says he, “intermingled with as gay flashings of courtly wit as ever Canning displayed; and a plentiful allowance, on



OLD ELLERAY.

all sides, of those airy transient pleasantries, in which the fancy of poets, however wise and grave, delights to run riot when they are sure not to be misunderstood. The weather was as Elysian as the scenery. There were brilliant cavalcades through the woods in the mornings, and delicious boatings on the lake by moonlight; and the last day the 'Admiral of the Lake' presided over one of the most splendid regattas that ever enlivened Windermere. Perhaps there were not fewer than fifty barges following in the Professor's radiant procession, when it paused at the point of Storrs to admit into the place of honour the vessel that carried Mr. Bolton and his guests. The bards of the Lakes" (Wordsworth and Wilson, for Southey had erysipelas of the foot, and could not leave Greta Hall) "led the cheers that hailed Scott and Canning; and music and sunshine, flags, streamers, and gay dresses, the merry hum of voices, and the rapid splashing of innumerable oars, made up a dazzling mixture of sensations as the flotilla wound its way among the richly foliated islands, and along bays and promontories peopled with enthusiastic spectators." ¹

Had we preferred to enter Lakeland by the ordinary route from Oxenholme *via* Kendal, and alighted at what used to be called Birthwaite—the Birch-clearing—at what is now better known as Windermere, we should have found ourselves at Professor Wilson's doors. Thanks to the public spirit of the present owner of Elleray we can climb up to Orrest Head and look down upon

¹ Lockhart's *Life of Scott*, Vol. VIII., p. 51.

the haunts of "Christopher North." We shall not see that "new home" which Sir Walter saw in 1825, "with certainly the most splendid panoramic view of all Windermere"; that has passed away to make room for a newer; but still part of the old cottage which Lockhart preferred, and the shadowy sycamore he so much "desiderated" may be seen. And in fancy we can recognise beneath its shadow not only the great-limbed genial Professor, but his beautiful wife, she "whose grace and gentle goodness could have found no lovelier or fitter home than Elleray, except that home where she now is." And we may dream of the home-coming of the bridal pair on that "tranquil day of nature and delight," May 11th, 1811, when Wilson brought hither Miss Jane Penny to share with him the rose-embowered cottage of his heart.

Any time in the early summers between 1809 and 1816 we should there have met remarkably good company, for thither came De Quincey, companion with Wilson upon the hills, sharer sometimes of his purse, and always of his affection; De Quincey, the courteous, the naturally dignified; De Quincey whose words were as many as his persuasion in argument was great. We can see Wilson, with just a wave of his hand, ordering a whole tableful of provisions for the goodly company he is expecting to-night, after the wrestling at Low-wood; and listen to De Quincey pouring forth torrents of admonition to the cook to remember to soak the rice for his staple dish—rice milk—before boiling, for at least twenty minutes longer, "lest consequences in-

calculably distressing should arise, which should increase the nervous irritation of the lining membranes of a stomach supersensitively nervous, and prevent him attending to matters of overwhelming importance to the nation and the world." What different men they are, little De Quincey, dark eyed, brown complexioned, lightly built, and high voiced; and great "Christopher North," tall, broad shouldered, of stalwart proportions, and with hair floating redundantly over neck and shoulders, red bearded, and shaggy of face! "His eye," said Harriet Martineau, "almost saw through stone walls; and as for his voice, there was no heart that could stand before it."¹ Wilson was not seldom mistaken, when in his roving costume, for some King of the Kairds or Prince of Drovers. His voice could bellow like thunder or coo like a dove; his ruddy countenance and fair blue flashing eye, his "lish" form and hearty laugh are still traditions in the country. Wilson had that strange mixture of mercurial wit, robust common sense, and tender feeling, that made him such a figure-head amongst literary men in the first half of this century. We are sitting at Ellera on the green sward, and up comes Billy Balmer in sailor's suit, face wizened and blown upon by many winds, deeply pitted too with small-pox, hair light yellow, and with hand as hard as a nail, to say that the "Emma" though roomier than the "Endeavour" "draws a deal more watter than she sud dea by rights"; but Wilson

¹ *Biographical Sketches*, by Harriet Martineau — "Professor Wilson."

waves off the faithful Billy, who loved him as a dog loves his master, and begs him see to it that the turf in the cocking-room is in good order, for that a farmer friend is bringing his cock to fight a main with the Bishop's son, Richard Watson, of Calgarth, this afternoon, and the Professor is going to try a fall, before the supper at Mrs. Ullock's, with the man who stood last in the Low-wood Ring yesterday.

As we talk, up through the shaded avenue with light and shadow upon her face, and leaning on the arm of her father, the Bishop, who should come but Miss Watson, the amiable and accomplished, to say that she has arranged everything for the morrow's water pic-nic on the lake, and that Charles Lloyd of Low Brathay, and the Hardens of Brathay Hall, and the Smiths of Coniston, Wordsworth and Dorothy, and Miss Jane Penny have promised to be there. "And you'll all come," says the genial Bishop, "and we will none of us talk shop—you shall not even quote from your 'Isle of Palms,' Mr. Wilson, or you shall be sconced. Old Gough, the botanist who tutored Dr. Dalton of Atomic Theory fame, has promised to come from Kendal, and dear old Dawson the mathematician of Sedbergh will come with him; I wish from my heart we could get Southey over, but wishes won't bring him over the Raise"; and so saying, the Bishop turns to go, not, however, without a pleasant crack about the newest pea with James Newby, the flower-god at Elleray, who always strove for the earliest asparagus as well as the first calceolarias.

We stroll now round the grounds, for Wilson wants us to see the rambling kind of bungalow building, half study, half conservatory, which he began to build in 1808, and which is still in part unfinished. The dining-room floor is up, or rather is laid with turf sods instead of boards, "the better for cocking !" says he. And thence, after wondering for a moment at the unparalleled terrace view which De Quincey spoke of as such an one as you might expect "on Athos seen from Samothrace," we walk towards the Professor's "Druid among trees" that overhangs the little cottage which he purchased in 1806, and to which he came for residence in the following year.

That cottage, in spite of the new bungalow, ever held first place in the Professor's heart; thither, as aforesaid, he brought his bride in 1811. There his children were born. The new house he let in 1815, when he lost his fortune and went to Edinburgh; and when he returned to the neighbourhood between 1823 and 1848, he as often went to the old cottage beneath the sycamore, as to the new bungalow.

We, who in our love for the Professor, would visit Elleraŷ to-day, need not repine that the present gracious owner pulled down that newer cottage when he rebuilt Elleraŷ in 1869. For it is with the older building that "Christopher North's" happy days are associated. One end of that has been rebuilt to accommodate the modern James Newby of Elleraŷ, and though the old drawing-room has been enlarged at the back, the main front of the house, drawing-room included, are just as they were

when, in the halcyon days between 1815, 1816, or later, till 1850, the property was in the possession of that "gey, good mon, Wilson o' Ellera."y."

Now let us go on and look at the favourite cocks, for two new birds have just been brought from Uldale, and they are to be compared with the black brass-winged cock by which Wilson sets such store, with "Caradice," with "Lord Derby," and "the Keswick Grey." Times have altered at the English Lakes; we no longer expect our Professors of Moral Philosophy to be Professors of the Art of Cock-fighting, but when Wilson came the scholars at many dale schools spent Easter Monday in cocking, and part of their master's stipend were the cock-pennies which they contributed. I have talked with an old man in his ninety-third year, who remembers the bull-baiting that used to take place in that very reputable little town Keswick, beyond the Raise, and who used to see the head boys and usher, by way of earning additional income, serving out the beer in the Fair Free Grammar School of Crosthwaite, without any need of special license, to the thirsty "Cockers."

Now we return to the cottage and find De Quincey ready to arrange with the Professor for a moonlight "sheep-stealing" ramble on the fells, or a trip to see the Professor's lady-love at old Brathay, for Christopher North is still unwed, and though the very blossoms say that Miss Jane Penny is expected to come to Ellera next month, in this April of the year 1811 all Christopher's talk is of the new spider he has discovered dropping his line from the huge overshadowing

sycamore, that is now breaking from its rosy tufts into leaf; of the setting of eggs he intends for the small Paisley hens, or of the new turf in the big south room for the mains. Now and again he repeats to us a snatch of his poem the *Isle of Palms*, which will not be given to the world until 1812. Not a great literary work either, but interesting as showing that the Hercules, who made the ground shake beneath his tread, and was a match for any dalesman in the wrestling ring, had also the heart of a girl.

Well Christopher, "crusty and musty" though once you were called for your boisterous wit, we only know you as geniality and gentleness, worth and manliness in one. "A Thor and a Balder with the touch of a Frost giant thrown in." Why, even in America, it is told that Emerson once quelled a noisy riot in Music Hall, Boston, when Garrison and Wendell Phillips had failed to gain a hearing, by just uttering your name.

As we turn to go, who should come hobbling up but Dawson of Sedbergh, forerunner he—among mathematicians—of Sedgwick of Dent, having on his arm that blind lover of flowers and all sweet woodland things, Gough the Botanist. They are full of the last number of *Maga* and of the praise of Wilson from Lockhart's pen. What various people loved the Professor! How many-sided were his powers to impress and to win affection! His stock of animal spirits had something to say for this, but his stock of sympathy had more. "He made," as Miss Martineau puts it, "others happy by being so intensely happy himself, and when he was

mournful no one desired to be gay." Thus it comes about, that go where you will in the Lake District, the "Professor's" name is still remembered, nowhere better perhaps than at the wrestling festivals, for he who contributed his article "Wrestliana" to *Blackwood* in November, 1823, did much to enlist the sympathies of the gentry round about in that noble game in which he himself was "a varra bad un to beat."

Go to Wastdale Head and you will hear the oft-told story of how the young Oxford undergraduate who leaped the Cherwell in Christ Church Meadows, astonished the natives of Wastdale by jumping twelve yards in three jumps, holding "a gey girt stean" in either hand. Old Ritson of Wastdale Head was oft-times at Elleray with the Professor, who delighted in the dalesman and his love of all sport and outdoor life.

The story of the Professor's pranks at Wastd'le went on from father to son, and the latter "warstled" in fancy, as his sire "warstled" in fact, with the young collegian lately come to take up his abode in the Lake country. The story shall be recounted in the son's words as chronicled by Edwin Waugh, merely with the note that the actor in the story was the speaker's father:—

"T' furst time 'at Professor Wilson cam to Was'dle Head," said Ritson, "he hed a tent set up in a field, an' he gat it weel stock'd wi' bread, an' beef, an' cheese, an' rum, an' ale, an' sic like. Then he gedder't up my gran-fadder, an' Thomas Tyson, an' Isaac Fletcher, an' Joseph Stable, an' aad Robert Grave, an' some mair, an' theer was gey deed amang 'em. Then, nowt wad sarra, but he

mun hev a bwoat, an' they mun a' hev a sail. Well, when they gat in t' t' bwoat, he tell'd 'em to be particklar careful, for he was liable to git giddy in t' head, an' if yan ov his giddy fits sud chance to cum on, he mud happen tumble in t' t' watter. Well, it pleased 'em all gaily weel, an' they said they'd take varra grit care on 'im. Then he leaned back an' called oot that they mun pull quicker. So they did, and what does Wilson du then, but topples ower eb'm ov his back i't' t' watter wid a splash. Then theer was a girt cry—'Eh, Mr. Wilson's i' t' watter!' an' yan click't, an' anudder click't, but nean o' them cud git hod on him, an' there was sic a scrow as nivver. At last, yan o' them gat him round t' neck as he popped up at teal o' t' bwoat, an' Wilson taad him to kep a gud hod, for he mud happen slip him ageàn. But what, it was nowt but yan ov his bits o' pranks, he was smirkin' an' laughin' o' t' time. Wilson was a fine gay, girt-hearted fellow, as strang as a lion, an' as lish as a trout, an' he hed sic antics as nivver man hed. Whativver ye sed tull him ye'd get your change back for it gaily seun. . . . Aa remember, theer was a 'murry neet' at Wastd'le Head that varra time, an' Wilson an' t' aad parson was theer amang t' rest. When they'd gitten a bit on, Wilson mead a sang about t' parson. He mead it reet off o' t' stick end. He began wi' t' parson furst, then he gat to t' Pope, an' then he turn'd it to th' divil, an' sic like, till he hed 'em fallin' off their cheers wi' fun. T' parson was quite stunn'd, an' rayder vex't an' o, but at last he burst oot laughin' wi' t' rest. He was like. Neabody could staand it. It

was au life an' murth amang us as lang as Professor Wilson was at Wastd'le Head."

One would scarcely have expected that Will Ritson's friend would have been Miss Martineau's, or that he should have so struck Carlyle's fancy that he would write of him after one of his genial suppers and all-night confabulations at Edinburgh as:—"A man I should like to know better. Geniuses of any sort, especially of so kindly a sort, are so very rare in this world."¹ But Carlyle did so write to his brother in 1827 from Comely Bank:—"Last night I supped with John Wilson, Professor of Moral Philosophy here, author of the 'Isle of Palms,' etc.; a man of the most fervid temperament, fond of all stimulating things, from tragic poetry down to whisky punch. He snuffed and smoked cigars and drank liquors, and talked in the most indescribable style. It was at the lodging of one John Gordon, a young very good man from Kirkcudbright, who sometimes comes here. Daylight came on us before we parted; indeed, it was towards three o'clock as the Professor and I walked home, smoking as we went. I had scarcely either eaten or drunk, being a privileged person, but merely enjoyed the strange volcanic eruption of our poet's convivial genius. He is a broad sincere man of six feet, with long dishevelled flax-coloured hair and two blue eyes, keen as an eagle's."²

It is true that Carlyle felt that Wilson shrunk from too close a union with him or anyone; encircled himself with wild cloudy sportfulness which appeared to the Seer of

¹ Froude's *Carlyle*, "First Thirty-five Years," Vol. I., p. 396.

² *Idem*, p. 395.

Comely Bank often reckless, and at bottom full of sharp sorrow. It is true that it was an everlasting puzzle to Carlyle how a man of Wilson's make "could halt between two opinions," could "love poetry and rizzered haddocks with whisky toddy"; could "outwatch the Bear" with Peter Robinson, and at the same time with William Wordsworth. But it is not more strange to those who realise the character of the Professor than that this cock-fighter, bull-hunter (everyone will remember the bull chase over White Moss, which De Quincey describes),¹ wrestler and practical joker, should have taken his punch and made rhymes for the shepherds at Wastdale Head, and at the same time written his *Isle of Palms* or his *Lakeland Fancies*, or prepared his lectures on Moral Philosophy. Or that he who delighted in cracks with Billy Balmer, and James Newby, and Admiral Alcock, should so have enjoyed the companionship of men like De Quincey and Hartley Coleridge. It was the exceeding great kindness of the heart of the giant of Ellera that attracted the "unhappy little opium eater of the quick meek soul," as Carlyle calls him, as well as the little gentle man of humble heart, who "wandered wayward as a breeze" till death's calm fell, and Grasmere churchyard gave him rest from strife.

One never wanders up the path to the Ellera old cottage without in imagination seeing Wilson and Hartley pacing up and down, Wilson's rapid sweeping steps threatening to outdistance Hartley, who trots, dog-like almost, in faithful love at his side. Hartley looks more

¹ See p. 143.

of a boy than his years would warrant, by reason of his extremely boyish manner of dress; a dark blue cloth round-jacket and white trousers, with a black silk handkerchief tied loosely round his throat; sometimes he wears a straw hat, or often like the Professor, hatless. What a contrast the two are, the one flaxen-haired with flowing locks, blue-eyed and with voice like a bell, with face all merriment; the other with black thick short curling hair, eyes very large, dark and expressive, voice musical and soft, and face almost sad in expression. Sometimes one hears the melancholy-faced little boy-man's mellow voice above the sound of the bees in the sycamore, reading aloud as he used to delight to do to Mrs. Wilson—but there is no voice now. Silently we too turn from this beautiful spot that haunted Wilson's day dreams all his life, and that even with the dreams that came with death, was still a happy presence to him. His love for his wife and for Elleray were one. It was not till he felt that he was about to join, in a heavenly Paradise, her who had been his queen in this earthly one, that the name of Jane and Elleray faded from his lips. He died in the first week of April, 1854. It was Sabbath night and his children were weeping round him when the light went out, and the heart once so full of vigour ceased to beat. The wish of his soul in youth had been granted:—

“ When nature feels the solemn hour is come
That parts the spirit from her mortal clay,
May that hour find me in my weeping home,
’Mid the blest stillness of a Sabbath-day!
May none I deeply love be then away.”¹

¹ *Christopher North*, Life by Mrs. Gordon, Vol. II., p. 364.

CHAPTER IV

FROM ELLERAY TO RYDAL : ECCLERIGG : THE BRIERY : LOW-
WOOD : DOVE NEST : CROFT LODGE : OLD BRATHAY :
BRATHAY HALL : THE KNOLL : SCALE HOW :
FOX HOW : FOX GHYLL : LOUGHRIGG
HOLME : RYDAL OLD HALL

CHARLOTTE BRONTE : REV. R. GRAVES : MRS. HEMANS : F. W.
FABER : C. LLOYD : THE HARDENS AND TENNYSON : MISS
FENWICK : MISS MARTINEAU : DR. ARNOLD :
DEAN STANLEY : E. QUILLINAN

WE wave adieu to Elleray, but not before we have once more climbed, where Wilson so often climbed, to gain the "bright scene from Orrest Head," which still bids that "beautiful romance of nature" therefrom revealed, "plead for its peace," as of old the poet prayed. Thence descending we fare along towards Ambleside, that ancient "seat, sitting or settlement of Hamil the Norseman," and leave behind us the village of the "birches in the thwaite" which, perchance, was first cleared of its wood when "Windar" drove his flocks to this high camp, or built his viking boats on yonder mere. Nor shall we forget that to

this valley may have come, with eyes wide open for some chance of delineating English character, the painter Hogarth. His uncle's house is still shown in the dale; and Hogarth is still a name well known among the Lakelanders.

We have passed Ecclerigg now, and are aware of a gateway from the road upon the right that leads up through woodlands to a house hardly visible here, but seen well enough by the tourist if he mounts the hill at the next turn, and goes up "the brow" from Low-wood to Troutbeck. That house, "Briary Close," was in 1850 tenanted by Sir James Kay-Shuttleworth. In that house Mrs. Gaskell first met the "Currer Bell" whose biography she would one day write. From that house Miss Charlotte Brontë first saw the land of the poets she had long made friends with. For it will be remembered that, as long before as 1827, the two sisters had written under assumed names to Southey and to Wordsworth, to ask advice as to whether they should dare to enter the lists for literary work and fame, or persevere in the dull mechanic round of daily governess.

Southey's answer, though delayed for two months, was felt, as Charlotte Brontë said at the time, to be consecrated. None but her father and her brother should see it; but the letter can now be seen of all, and all who read it must honour the kindly-hearted fatherly-minded man who wrote with such real wish to guide aright his young consultant.

But Southey wrote one sentence he would perhaps unwrite to-day—"Literature cannot be the business of a

woman's life, and it ought not to be."¹ And Charlotte Brontë in her reply penned a sentence which she too must have soon forgotten or would probably have drawn her pen through, on a second thought. "I trust," she wrote, "I shall never more feel ambitious to see my name in print; if the wish should rise, I'll look at Southey's letter, and suppress it. It is honour enough for me that I have written to him, and received an answer."²

It would have been a misfortune for English literature if the young girl in the lonely moorland vicarage at Haworth had taken the advice which she had received from the Laureate of Greta Hall, "as kindly and considerately as it was given." It did extinguish for a time all idea of literary enterprise. Not till ten years later was the *Professor* ready for rejection by the publisher. Not till ten years later still, on October 16, 1847, was *Jane Eyre*, a novel in three volumes, by Currer Bell, printed and published by Smith, Elder & Co.

But Southey's second letter had conveyed a warm invitation. "Let me," said he, "now request that, if ever you should come to these Lakes while I am living here, you will let me see you. You would then think of me afterwards with the more goodwill, because you would perceive that there is neither severity nor moroseness in the state of mind to which years and observation have brought me."³ How Charlotte Brontë's heart must have bounded within her, but there was no money to spare for such a pleasure-journey, nor apparent chance of ever having it.

¹ *Life of Charlotte Brontë*, by Mrs. Gaskell, p. 115.

² *Idem*, p. 117.

³ *Idem*, p. 118.

The slow years brought her enough of both, and in 1850 the authoress of *Jane Eyre* and *Shirley* came for her first visit to the Land of Lakes, from which Southey and Wordsworth had passed away for ever. Here from the terrace of "Briery," and the higher ground of Wansfell, she was able to compare "the richly watered garden of the land" with her own grey treeless moorland waste, and to astonish those with her, by her constant and careful observation of the clouds, and weather signs. They had no idea till she told them, "what a companion the sky became to anyone living in solitude."¹ Hence she discerned that the Lake country is "a glorious region," of which she "had only seen the similitude in dreams, waking or sleeping."² She realised too that the Lake country cannot be known and felt in company, least of all in carriage company. Her host was the kindest possible, but she longed to be able to wander amongst these hills alone. "Decidedly," she wrote, "I find it does not agree with me to prosecute the search of the picturesque in a carriage. A waggon, a spring-cart, even a post-chaise might do, but the carriage upsets everything. I long to slip out unseen, and to run away by myself in amongst the hills and dales."³

We plod on now, and just before we reach Low-wood, and beyond the grand new-looking mansion on our left, a streamlet hurries to the Lake. That is Skel-Ghyll Beck, which has been so called ever since the first Norsemen shepherds had their huts or "scales" high up beside this mountain stream, or drove their flocks and herds to water

¹ *Life of Charlotte Brontë*, by Mrs. Gaskell, p. 339.

² *Idem*, p. 341.

³ *Idem*.



OLD AMBLESIDE MARKET PLACE, 1852.

from the Fell of Woden, Wonsfell,¹ which rises on our right. Here by this beck did Wordsworth and his swift-eyed sister Dorothy, rest in their walk from Kendal to Grasmere as they trudged together, in the Spring of 1794, for the first time towards the valley that should one day be their home. And happy went the moments; all the place was filled for these two lovers, as they seemed, with such sweet joy in sight, in thought, and sound, that they never forgot it. Years after, in one of his miscellaneous sonnets, Wordsworth wrote,

“The immortal Spirit of one happy day
Lingers beside that Rill, in vision clear.”²

We leave “the little unpretending rill,” and on through just “such sun and shower,” as Wordsworth and his sister knew on their April walk, we go, to where a grander “House of Call” than ever last century dreamed of, shines sunnily upon us. In imagination we pause for a crack with old Jackson of the little Low-wood Inn, famous then as the possessor of one of the only two tubs—or cars on wheels—that could be hired hereabout; famous since as being the subject of a poem by Hartley Coleridge. I daresay if we could look within the little sanded parlour, that once welcomed the coming, and sped the parting, guest, we should hear Hartley paying for a friendly glass by the singing of his favourite song, “The Tortoise-shell Cat,” or by the making of an eloquent speech on national or local matters.

As we pass Dove’s Nest, we remember that here for some years dwelt the Rev. Robert Percival Graves, him-

¹ It is fair to say that the derivation is doubtful; some think that “Wansfell” = the Fell of the Wangs or pastures.

² *Lines*, p. 578.

self a poet and the uncle of one ; but it is of a poetess we shall most think, for in the shaded road between Wansfell and the Lake, we catch a glimpse of a woman "with a face of an angel," exquisite in complexion, with a profusion of auburn hair falling on either side her brow, "with eyes like those of a fawn for lustre, depth, and tenderness," but sad as tender. That is Felicia Hemans—alas ! Infelicia had been a truer name. She will walk with us this fine September day of 1830 to see Harden, the one time sub-editor of the *Caledonian Mercury*, who now resides at Brathay Hall, for there is a gathering there to-day of friends—Faber, Hartley and Derwent Coleridge, Whytehead, the young "priest o' Langdale," Owen Lloyd, and perhaps the lady of "Lile Owey's" heart, a daughter of the house, will be there. And there also are to be the three Rydal Dorothys, for the third Dorothy, the beautiful Mrs. Benson Harrison, came, in 1827, to Green Bank, as it was called in those days, the Scale How of to-day, and Dorothy the elder, for all that she has walked nearly 20,000 miles with her brother the poet, has not yet broken down in health.

Just as we reach the bridge over the river Rotha, there comes forth from the green-mantled little cottage beside it, a short square-built man with dark eyes, massive head, benign look and beautiful voice, old Parson Dawes' high church curate, Frederick William Faber, the poet—a poet to-day too little known. Faber, poet of the Bratha, may have his home here ; but those of us who read his poems may meet him by Thirlmere, on Castlehead at Keswick, or wandering with Wordsworth and Crabbe Robinson on

Loughrigg, and holding high discourse on the mystery of life and death, and the life that knows not death.

I said may meet, I ought to have said might have met ; for armed with what new Rifle Range Act I know not, the Ambleside volunteers have taken possession of more than one of the principal approaches to Loughrigg, and the ghosts of the poets and their lovers, unwilling to be made targets of, have fled from those groves of Cithaeron that Arnold knew ; they come no more as of old to Loughrigg's Heliconian rills, fill their hands no more with mealy bird-eeen and the glossy butterwort, crush not the fragrant juniper nor couch on pleasant bracken, green and gold. But if we cannot walk with Faber, the lover of Loughrigg, in his home haunts, at least we may meet him where

“ Foamy Duddon forces clamorous way
Amid the opposing straits of rock, or brawls
With pebbly sounds across the shingles blue” ;

or may find him if we climb from Eskdale or from Duddon up the Druid-haunted hill of Black-Combe when the “night advances her engrossing silence there,” and when “along the uneven edges of the hills, the gradual muster of the stars begins.” Yes, or where the river-course of Duddon, “’neath the morning sun, glances like beads of diamond or topaz,” we shall surely come across good Sir Lancelot the hermit, and Faber his poet-friend, and shall not be surprised to find in both their hands that magic flower that carries

“ Its imperial sceptre thro’ the woods,”

the foxglove's purple wand.

Faber left Ambleside in 1840, but he is to this day remembered as the sweet-voiced leader of the parish choir, the stern-voiced preacher of self-sacrifice and the giver of light and life to the little village beneath the old church on the hill.

We are passing the Croft, for ever hospitable, which so often delighted to welcome Hartley Coleridge. That old peasant, breaking stones upon the road, remembers how once he asked Hartley, on his way back from dinner with Mr. Branker of Croft Lodge, if he should fetch a landau for him, and how Hartley replied, "No ! a *barrow-dau*" was all he required. Poor Hartley ! had the same kindly friend been present when you were returning home from Wanlass How, on that December night of 1848, you would not have missed your way and fallen into the swollen Scandale beck, to catch the cold which was your death !

Now towards Clappersgate and over Bratha Bridge to Old Brathay we go, there to find Charles Lloyd sitting, as once with Charles Lamb he sat, by the banks of the river, hearkening, in company of De Quincey, "with profound emotion and awe," to the sound of the river like "the sound of pealing anthems streaming from the portals of some illimitable cathedral."¹ Charles Lloyd was no common man, but, as De Quincey says, one never to be forgotten : "Rousseauish" too much, but of delicate sensibility, and, from his translation of Alfieri, seen to be an accomplished scholar. A man, as Clarkson

¹ Cf. *De Quincey's Works*, ed. by Masson, "Lake Reminiscences," Chap. VIII.

once wrote of him to Wilkinson of Yanwath, "of a very feeling heart, whose soul was harrowed up by the distresses incident to large towns." He published his first volume of poems in 1796, and if they are not very remarkable, at least they have been credited with some vigour and originality.

But we cannot pass the old vicarage at Brathay without thought of the dark cloud of mental derangement that fell on poor Charles Lloyd, to be bequeathed, alas! to his son, the gentle Owen—that friend of Faber and of Hartley Coleridge—that poet of the Rushbearing, whose hymn they still sing each year at Ambleside—Owen Lloyd of the beautiful face, and "the sanguine complexion and light yellow hair"; Owen Lloyd, the delighter in music and maker of melody, who loved the dalesmen and the dales, and

" Now rests in peace in Langdale's peaceful vale,
And sleeps secure beneath the grassy sod."

Above him stands the stone whereon is written: "To the memory of Owen Lloyd, M.A., nearly twelve years incumbent of this chapel. Born at Old Brathay, March 31, 1803, died at Manchester, April 18, 1841, aged 38." He is still remembered by the family with whom he lodged in Ambleside, as a man of the most gracious manner, devotion to duty, and love of his little mountain parish; and while Wordsworth is held in honour, men will read the epitaph he wrote for the young fellside priest's grave-stone, there, in the little churchyard of Chapel Stile, in Langdale Valley.

Never was Wordsworth more careful in his accurate

narrative of facts than when he was writing an epitaph, as all will remember who know what pains he took with the epitaph on Southey's tomb in Crosthwaite Church.¹ The epitaph to Owen Lloyd's memory is no exception to the rule. The great and memorable company of mourners that Wordsworth noted when they bore the body of "Lile Owey" to rest by the ewe tree he had himself planted to shadow his own "sleeping," finds a chronicler in the Rydal Poet's verse:

"Through life was Owen Lloyd endeared
To young and old, and how revered
Had been that pious spirit, a tide
Of humble mourners testified."²

And now we have reached Brathay Hall, where the Hardens lived from 1804 till 1834, when they passed to Fieldhead, near Hawkshead. The talk of the afternoon is about the book of *Poems, Chiefly Lyrical*, lately published by Effingham Wilson for young Alfred Tennyson. Robert Southey has been reading extracts from the thin volume of 154 pages which is to be made such jest of by "Crusty Musty Christopher," in *Blackwood's Magazine*. On the fly-leaf of the little book you will find the inscription, "Robert Southey, 27 July, 1830, Keswick, from James Spedding"; and the Laureate tells us that James Spedding writes enthusiastically of the young author who won the prize poem at Cambridge, the subject of which was *Timbuctoo*. "Better go and stay there," snorts Christopher North. Coleridge says, "He has begun

¹ See Vol. I., p. 76 *seq.*

² *Epitaph in the Churchyard of Langdale*, p. 647.

to write verses without very well understanding what metre is." "I disagree," answered Southey; and asking for silence finds it readily granted, as he reads in succession, *Recollections of the Arabian Nights*, the *Ode to Memory*, and *Mariana*. The conversation buzzes up in the Brathay Hall drawing-room, but dies to a whisper to hear Miss Harden's account of how they met the young author only a week ago by the merest chance.

"We were returning, you know, from Bordeaux after a visit to the Pyrenees on the 8th of this month, in the steam-packet "Leeds," for Dublin, and found we had four fellow passengers, two of whom mother knew, a Mr. Robertson Glasgow and his cousin. The other two were a Mr. Hallam and his friend, Mr. Tennyson. We had fine weather but saw nothing of Mr. Hallam the first day as he was a bad sailor. He was a very interesting, delicate looking man, but he came on deck the second day, and then he and his friend delighted us by reading aloud some of Scott's novels, which had been recently published in one volume.'

"And what was young Tennyson like?' 'Well, he was all large cape, tall hat and decided nose; but you shall see for yourselves, for father sketched the group as they read and we listened.'" And so saying, off Miss Harden goes to bring the sketch of the young poet, sprawling his length upon the deck, reading to the young ladies and their mother—all balloon and coal-scuttle bonnet, while the handsome Robertson Glasgow sits by their side. "But what were the young men doing in the Pyrenees in this stormy time of war for Independence?'

‘That we could not quite make out. There was some talk of their having taken over some money for the relief of the rebels and some despatches in invisible ink. All Mr. Hallam said was, that he had had a wild hustling time of it and played his part as conspirator in a small way, and made friends with two or three gallant men who have since been trying their luck with Valdes. And Mr. Tennyson talked to us about a Señor Ojeda, a man whose heart was as dark as his skin, who intended to cut the throats of all the priests, and said that he himself had been taken for a Spaniard. I do not wonder Mr. Tennyson was not taken for an Englishman, go where he would in the Pyrenees, so long as he said nothing; I never saw a more Spanish looking man in my life.’” So the conversation runs on, and it is hard to say whether the writer of the *Poems, Chiefly Lyrical*, is the hero of the hour, or the young girl who so naïvely recounts her chance acquaintance with him on the Bordeaux boat, till the evening shadows fall, and Johnny Wilson tells his father that Billy Balmer, the boatman, has brought “the Gazelle” as far up the Rotha as Croft Lodge garden corner, and with cheers for the Professor and much merry chaff from Bob Southey the Bard, the Brathay Hall party begins to disperse.

We hie back to Ambleside, and leave houses like Old Brathay Vicarage and Brathay Hall full of the ghosts of accomplished men and women. For there dwelt Christopher North’s bride; there, too, the bride of that Wordsworth’s who became father of the late Bishop of Lincoln in the early days of this century. We pass the old dame’s



PORTRAIT OF MISS MARTINEAU.

house in Clappersgate where Derwent and Hartley Coleridge lodged what time they went for schooling to Mt. Dawes. We go by Miller Bridge, the house beside the Rotha, where Parson Dawes, who came to Ambleside in 1805 from Dublin with a great reputation for scholarly attainment, made a name for himself, and helped to make the names of his pupils.

To his little private school went four of the Lloyds, two Coleridges, three of the Hardens, Wordsworth's boys, the Norths, and several Irish youths from Kerry, amongst whom was young Stephen Spring-Rice, and, as I think, Aubrey De Vere. There Parson Dawes, the successor in the cure to Priest Krakel, dwelt beneath Loughrigg by the river side till he built the house in which the Catholic Priest dwells at this day. Crossing the river, and entering the town by the church, we may haply find ourselves at a house famous in later times as the place of rest for the learned and the accomplished, the literary and the thoughtful—the home of Miss Fenwick, Gale House. Miss Fenwick, whose notes to Wordsworth's Poems would have entitled her to our gratitude, even if she had not been, as she was, a real help by her criticism, as well as an adviser of the poet, dwelt and suffered here; for she, for whose invalid chair the terrace at Rydal Mount was devised, was indeed a sufferer; yet was she given to hospitality. How Sir Henry Taylor, Henry Crabbe Robinson, and many of their time, honoured and enjoyed her friendship, let them be witness!

We cannot pass the approach to the Salutation Inn without recalling that there once stood here the old

Market Cross, that close by was the quaint little post-office, rendezvous of the poets and of the wit and talent of the neighbourhood; the homely but tenderly-careful lodging of young Owen Lloyd, and the birthplace of a most worthy and amiable man, who by sheer industry and native talent has won for himself a post of honour among the archaeologists, antiquarians, and local historians of their beloved North Country, Cornelius Nicholson.

The father of Cornelius lived in that delightfully quaint upper house with overhanging eaves and tiny diamond-paned windows above the pillared market, that used to stand most picturesquely where the Mechanics' Institute is now seen. He rang the bell to call the wool merchants to their sale, and butter sellers to their butter cross, and gave out such letters as came to hand. He was scribe and post-master as well as market-house and toll-keeper, and drew up wills for the whole neighbourhood. In that sense he was one of the literary characters of the Lakes.

Dr. Gibson tells us the following racy anecdote of him. On one occasion he had been summoned to Langdale to make the will of a dying statesman. His account of it was as follows: "It was plaain eneuf 'at ther was nea time to looase, sooa I got out my writin' gear and swattit me to t' bed t' tak down what he hed to tell me. Well, it seem't till me 'at he wanted to leaave summat till everybody akin till him. Ther was fifty pund till this un, and forty pund till that un, and thirty pund till somebody else, till I thowte he'd gitten gaily nar t' far end o' what he hed to leave, but ther was niver a wurd about owte fo' t' wife, an' when he stop't I says, 'But

hevn't ye furgitten sumbody?' 'Nay,' says he, 'ther nin furgitten, I think.' 'Yes, yes,' says I, 'ye furgitten t' mistress!' He rear't hissels up i' t' bed when I said that, wi' meear strength nor I thowte was left in him, and t' wurd com hist out like through his bare teeth as he said, 'Forgit her! nay, never! I've hed a sorry time on't wid her!' 'An o 'at I cud git him to due,' continued the worthy scribe and will-maker, 'was to leeave her a melder o' meel.'"

Nor can we forget that one, lately passed away, once dwelt in the house called Eller How, at the entrance of Scandale, and for ten years laboured industriously to sow seeds of a true education, which placed her in the front rank of the helpers of our England. For in that house dwelt Anne Clough, the sister of the "Thyrsis" whose name is engraved upon his mother's tombstone in Grasmere churchyard.

As we leave the town in the direction of Grasmere, we pass a house on the left, on a sunny terrace, almost hidden away among its trees, above a "careless ordered garden," where wild flowers are freely allowed to grow, and nature has her own sweet way, and where to-day lives William Henry Hills, who has done more than most men in his generation to keep the natural beauty of our Lakeland undisturbed for the enjoyment of over-worked Englishmen.

In that house, built by herself, dwelt Harriet Martineau for the last thirty years of her life. She died in 1876. In the garden stands upon a stone pillar a sundial; beneath it the date 1847, and the prayer, "Come, Light,

visit me!" reminding us of the dying words of Goethe, "Light, more Light!" Whether as traveller in the east or west, a teller of tales to children, historian, novelist, educationist, or social reformer, her fame, though deservedly great, is not so remarkable as the power she wielded with the pen of a journalist, during the Civil War in America, in the direction of maintaining peace between this country and the United States. One of the most conspicuous advocates of the Abolition of Slavery, she also constantly appealed for justice to the native races of India, and for many reforms at home, the accomplishment of which she was happy in living to witness.

She had many friends and many foes. *Blackwood* spoke of her work on America as "exactly the book which might be expected from Miss Martineau, giddy, self-willed, well-intentioned, and ill-informed—a book laden with absurdity, philosophy, and everything else in the world"; while the *Spectator* characterised it as "*longo intervallo*, the best, the truest, the most philosophical work which has yet appeared on the social condition of the United States." I am writing these words in the very room in which she penned that remarkable book. I wonder how much she cared then, or cares now, for the opinion of either reviewer!

One never passes the gate to the Knoll without being reminded that, in March, 1848, Emerson spent two days there as the guest of Miss Martineau; and that hence on Sunday he accompanied his hostess to pay a call on the aged poet, whom he had not seen for the past fifteen years. They found the poet asleep on the sofa, and

one expects that they felt it had been almost a pity that they woke him, for the old man was "at first silent and indisposed, but soon became full of talk on the French news," and bitter on Frenchmen, bitter on Scotchmen, bitter on all Edinburgh reviewers, for neither Scotchmen, Frenchmen, reviewers, nor writers, from Jeffrey to Gibbon, could write English. But the old bard allowed that Tennyson was "a right poetic genius, though with some affectation." "He had thought an elder brother of Tennyson (Charles Tennyson Turner, the sonnet writer) at first the better poet, but must now reckon Alfred the true one." "He had a healthy look," adds Emerson, "with a weather-beaten face, his face corrugated, especially the large nose."¹ But Emerson remembered too how Miss Martineau praised the poet, not for his poetry, "but for thrift and economy; for having afforded to his country neighbours an example of a modest household, where comfort and culture were secured without any display."²

Other guests have made the Knoll famous; hither for her second visit to the English Lakes came Charlotte Brontë to be Miss Martineau's guest, in the early spring of 1851. There, on a certain Sunday evening, after many requests, the "little, quiet, bird-like lady" allowed herself to be mesmerised by the stronger will of her hostess. There, on another day, her eyes filled with tears at the touch of that enthusiasm for justice done to the memory of the Iron Duke by Miss Martineau's first page of the

¹ *Emerson's English Traits*, Riverside Edition, pp. 279, 280.

² *Idem*, pp. 280, 281.

chapter on the Peninsular War, in her *History of the Peace*.

Her own account of that visit is worth repeating. "I am at Miss Martineau's for a week. Her house is very pleasant, both within and without, arranged at all points with admirable neatness and comfort. . . . I rise at my own hour, breakfast alone. . . . I pass the morning in the drawing-room, she in her study. At two o'clock we meet, work, talk and walk together till five—her dinner hour—spend the evening together. . . . She appears exhaustless in strength and spirits, and indefatigable in the faculty of labour. She is a great and good woman; of course not without peculiarities, but I have seen none as yet that annoy me. She is both hard and warm-hearted, abrupt and affectionate, liberal and despotic. I believe she is not at all conscious of her own absolutism. When I tell her of it she denies the charge warmly; then I laugh at her. I believe she almost rules Ambleside. Some of the gentry dislike her, but the lower orders have a great regard for her. . . . She is certainly a woman of wonderful endowments, both intellectual and physical; and though I share few of her opinions, and regard her as fallible on certain points of judgment, I must still award her my sincerest esteem. The manner in which she combines the highest mental culture with the nicest discharge of feminine duties filled me with admiration, . . . without adopting her theories I yet find a worth and greatness in herself, and a consistency, benevolence, perseverance in her practice, such as wins the sincerest

esteem and affection. She seems to be the benefactress of Ambleside, yet takes no sort of credit to herself for her active and indefatigable philanthropy, . . . all she does is well done, from the writing of a history down to the quietest female occupation, . . . her servants and her poor neighbours love as well as respect her.”¹

It is good for us to know that heavy as was the load laid on Charlotte Brontë's heart by the exposition of avowed atheism and materialism—the first she had ever read,—written by her friend Miss Martineau and her colleague Mr. Atkinson,—that strange combination of the modern man of science and the ancient Greek sage—the visit she paid to the Knoll had so impressed her with Miss Martineau's sincerity, that she could not bear the contemptuous sneers cast by critics upon the book. She urged her friends to read the *Letters on the Nature and Development of Man* with unprejudiced minds, and sent her hostess of the Knoll whatever of kindly tone she found in her friends' letters about the work they criticised.

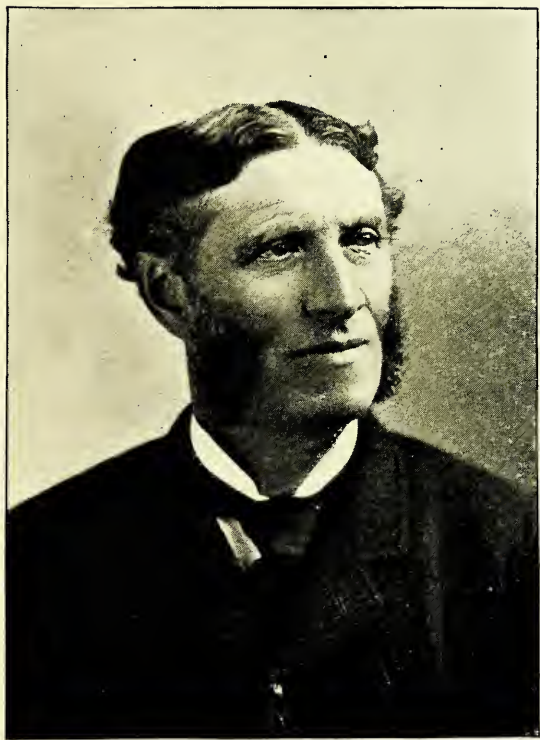
Other visitors than Charlotte Brontë have made Miss Martineau's home memorable. John Bright was once—in Miss Martineau's absence from home—caught upon his knees, measuring the study for a carpet which he was specially having made as a pleasant surprise-gift to the political economist and philanthropist who ruled at the Knoll. Just opposite the gate of the Knoll

¹ *Works of the Brontës*, Mrs. Gaskell's "Life of Charlotte Brontë," Vol. VII., pp. 364-367.

is the approach from the main road to the grounds of Scale How. Faber the poet knew every stick and stone of that rising garden ground, when, between 1830 and 1840, he tutored the nest of nightingales that the Harrison boys truly were; and up that steep gravel drive it is remembered that Wordsworth plodded many a time to ask after his niece's health in the days when she was dangerously ill.

On we go by Lesketh How, built by Dr. Davy in the year 1843 or '44. All the literary associations that cluster round Lancrigg rise up before us as we pass this unpretending picturesque house on our right, for Mrs. Davy was a daughter of the beautiful Mrs. Fletcher. And now if we look across the valley towards Loughrigg, we see the holiday haunt that Dr. Arnold planned, whose chimneys, I had it on the best authority then living, that of the builder himself, were Wordsworth's architectural creation and special care.¹ Here to his mimic Cithaeron, as he called the glades above Fox How, came in 1833, Arnold, the great headmaster whom England in 1892 determined to honour. Thither were welcomed many friends in the years, alas too few, during which the Doctor found the sorely needed rest of his glad holidays. After his death, here remained the widow and children of one whom Miss Brontë spoke

¹ Miss Arnold writes:—My father took Brathay Hall for the summer holidays, 1832. The following year he took Allan Bank, Grasmere, for a year, and spent the summer holidays of 1833 and winter holidays of 1833-4 there. The Wythburn Walk was taken in July 1833. They took possession of Fox How, July 1834.



PORTRAIT OF MATTHEW ARNOLD.

of as "the greatest and best man of his time." The authoress of *Jane Eyre* described her first visit to Fox How in August of 1850 thus: "It was twilight as I drove to the place. The house looked like a nest half buried in flowers and creepers: and, dusk as it was, I could feel that the valley and the hills round were beautiful as imagination could dream." "Flowers and creepers" note, for the dark Scotch firs and the delicate birches that now stand on the lawn at Fox How and embower the garden walks beside the Rotha were all planted by Dr. Arnold, and would not be a generation old when Charlotte Brontë came for her first visit. The date and initials below the eastern gable chimney tell us that Thomas and Mary Arnold built Fox How in 1833. Still in the drawing-room hangs the life-like portrait by Phillips of the Doctor as he appeared in his vigour, and opposite hangs the portrait of his beloved wife whose hair was never blanched with grey, though 77 summers had passed over her head when the artist drew her face.

I stood a little while ago in Dr. Arnold's study at Rugby, still quite unchanged in arrangement. There were the bookshelves and the busts of great Romans and Greeks looking down as they looked down upon him, who, on the eve of his forty-seventh birthday, Saturday the 11th June, 1842, wrote in his diary that "as far as ambition is concerned, it is, I trust, fully mortified. . . . Still there are works which I, with God's permission, would do before the night cometh; especially that great work"¹

¹ *Life of Dr. Arnold*, by Dean Stanley, Vol. II., p. 334.

—of improving the intellectual management of the school. That prayer was granted, and yet not granted—he died before another sun had set; but he lives, and his sun of Purity and Uprightness, of Self-sacrifice and Humility, of Zeal and Faithfulness, in endeavour for the youth of England, shall never set.

It is not of Dr. Arnold dead, but of Arnold living amongst his boys, Edward, Thomas, the writer of an admirable *Introduction to English Literature*, William, who wrote *Oakfield*, Matthew, the poet, and Matthew's school-boy and college friends, the two Arthurs, Clough and Stanley, that we think, as we gaze at that house beside the Rotha. It is the Rotha with which Matthew Arnold seemed to match his song. Of the Rotha's music it might be said,

“ He, of the very few, was surely one
Who ‘heard it right’ when Wordsworth home had gone.”

Ere we turn to leave the gate that swings with such graciousness for all friends of the great head-master, we cannot but mourn to note that the great birch-tree Wordsworth planted hard by, and some of the fir-trees upon the lawn that Arnold set in the ground, have disappeared. The gale of the November of 1893 seems to have been almost cyclonic here, and nearly a hundred trees that embowered Fox How went down.

But who are these, a well contented pair, who gaze towards Rydal and its glorious amphitheatre of wood and fell? They are Dean Stanley and his bride Lady Augusta, hither come for their too short honeymoon to this, the haunt of happy school-day memories; the sad sweet place

of recollection of all that Arnold had been to him and others. Had we been here in September of 1842, we should have seen Arnold's biographer passing backward and forward with his friend Lake, the present Dean of Durham, to his lodgings at Rydal, in the pauses of that literary work which gives us Arnold as Stanley knew him, and enshrines "a love that was wonderful, passing the love of woman."

I can well believe that Stanley, as he gazes by Fox How gate up to the Fairfield height, is speaking of the way in which the scene strikes him, as "more beautiful than ever, at once so wild and so like home"; is telling of all that Mrs. Arnold was to him in the old Rugby and Fox How days, of her wisdom, of her cheerful calm; telling of the beauty of that home life he knew here in sorrowful 1843, of how the great Whateley romped with the younger children, and "rough, unimaginative man that he was," melted one evening into tears, as Stanley read Gell's letter about Arnold, and taking off his spectacles, cried like a child over its tender reminiscences.

To Fox Ghyll, close by Fox How, for many years did Matthew Arnold's eldest sister, his "earliest audience and his last best critic," come from her happy home beside the Wharfe. There, too, as William Edward Forster rested from the toils of Parliament, was leisure given to him to collect materials for the weighty articles in the *Westminster Review* that from time to time came from his pen.

The next house with any literary associations that the

eye falls upon is Loughrigg Holme. Thither in 1841, Edward Quillinan brought, as his second wife, Dora, the only daughter of Wordsworth.

In 1814, Edward Quillinan had published his first poem—*Dunluce Castle*. It was not a remarkable poem, but was like to have been the cause of bloodshed—for young Quillinan, then a lad of twenty-three, was mightily enraged at a sarcastic review of it in *Blackwood*, by a certain Captain Hamilton, under the heading *Poems by a Heavy Dragoon*, and he set off for Edinburgh to fight a duel with the Captain, but came back his friend. Edward Quillinan appears to have held the pen in one hand and the pistol in the other, but he was by nature a man of peace, with a tongue that sometimes seems to have been a sharp sword. As a satirist, in a periodical called *The Whim*, he involved himself in three duels at a later date.

An Ambleside printer has lately produced an elegant little edition of Quillinan's Poems, and though the greater part can hardly be said to bear reprinting, there are some few pathetic passages which will touch the heart that has grieved. The *Athenaeum* was, however, not far wrong in attributing the chief interest of his poems "to the group amongst which they were printed, rather than to any substantial merit of their own."

Not great in stature, but refined and somewhat distinguished in appearance, was this same Quillinan, as is endorsed by a note in Lockhart's letter to his wife, in which he ill-naturedly describes the friendly breakfast party at Rydal Mount assembled to do Sir Walter Scott

honour, on August 23, 1825, as "A large assemblage of vulgar women and men," but adds, "little Quillinan 'the heavy dragoon,' the only genteelish figure."¹

We pass the clump of fir trees in the meadow of Fidler's Farm, and remember how there on that rocky knoll in mid-valley was probably at one time a Roman camp. For by its side, deep buried "'neath the mould and hidden underground like sleeping worms," the Roman way runs still towards Pavement End at Grasmere.

But since those days other castle fortresses have been probably built upon the site, and have mingled with the dust of the Romans. Of one of these Wordsworth has written :

" Fallen, and diffused into a shapeless heap,
Or quietly self-buried in earth's mould,
Is that embattled House, whose massy Keep
Flung from yon cliff a shadow large and cold." ²

He is probably referring to that Rydal Old Hall, which when this "Valley of the Rye" was granted in 1280 to Roger de Lancaster, and when by charter of Edward I. a park for deer was here first enclosed, would be needed as a guard house against the Rebels of the North, or the Robbers from over the Border. One expects that when Sir Thomas Le Fleming of Coniston obtained the property of Rydal Old Hall and Park, by marriage with Isabel, co-heir of Sir John de Lancaster of Horngill Castle, in 1420, it would all the more be necessary to

¹ *Scott's Familiar Letters*, Vol. II., p. 341.

² Fenwick's Note to the *Duddon Sonnets*, p. 300 of Wordsworth's *Poetical Works*, ed. by Knight, Vol. VI.

have a safe defence against the Scots. For they would never forget how the first Le Fleming, Sir Michael, had come into Cumberland, at the request of his kinsman, Baldwin the Earl of Flanders, to help Norman Will to his kingdom, and how it was for his bold and bloody work against the bare-legged laddies that Sir William de Meschines had granted him Aldingham, Beckermeth Castle, and much fair land in old Strathclyde.

But as we look away from the site of the Old Hall, to the manor-house beneath its wooded slope, we wonder if to any house in England has been granted more glorious setting and background. We wonder whatever Gray the poet was about, when after belittling Rydal Water, he passes Rydal Hall with the simple remark in his *Journal in the Lakes*, that "Sir Michael is now on his travels and all this timber far and wide belongs to him"; one can but suppose that he was wearied of his sixteen miles' walk. Luckily for us old Gilpin, the lover of the rough woodland, has seen Rydal Park and described it with a feeling heart, and one English Laureate has wandered amongst its ancient trees, has sung of "its time-dismantled oaks," its "ivy tods," and has felt that here,

"amid the sweep of endless woods,
Blue pomp of lakes, high cliffs, and falling floods,
Not undelightful are the simplest charms,
Found by the grassy door of mountain farms."¹

Here listening in the upper Rydal Park, when

"The song of mountain-streams, unheard by day,
Now hardly heard, beguiles my homeward way,"²

¹ *Evening Walk*, p. 6.

² *Idem*, p. 9.

he has caught

“ The distant forge’s swinging thump profound :
Or yell, in the deep woods, of lonely hound.”¹

Nor has that poet forgotten, how where above the Fall

“ the huddling rill
Brightens with water-breaks the hollow ghyll,”²

suddenly

“ In rocky basin its wild waves repose,”³

and that there,

“ Inverted shrubs, and moss of gloomy green,
Cling from the rocks, with pale wood weeds between ;
And its own twilight softens the whole scene.”⁴

But we are thinking of the Literary Associations of the Lakes ; and what had the owner of Rydal Hall to do with them ? Daniel, the nineteenth Le Fleming in descent, who was created baronet, was more than a county magnate, a terror of evil-doers, or evil voters, or the wickedly unorthodox—as he would call poor Fox the Quaker, the Papists, and Romanists of his day—he was by way of being a litterateur as well. It is but quite lately that the manuscripts of Sir Daniel, who took a very active part in county affairs during the reigns of Charles II., James II., and William III., have been arranged and published, under Mr. Maxwell Lyte’s care, by the Historical Manuscripts Commission ; and those of us who care to know what the country customs hereabout, or the college customs at Oxford, the facts of the Royalist rising in 1651, and the state of parties and politics in London and the north, were in the end of

¹ *Evening Walk*, p. 9. ² *Idem*, p. 4. ³ *Idem*. ⁴ *Idem*.

the 17th century, must be very much indebted to that careful old chronicler, friend of Sir William Dugdale the historian, who, till his death in 1711, kept up the rôle

“Of a good old English gentleman,
One of the olden time,”

at Rydal Hall.

But in addition to his “news letters” and “account books” and the like which he so faithfully kept, this Sir Daniel was a collector and keeper of historical materials relating to his family, and to the counties of Westmoreland, Cumberland, and Lancashire. His *Description of the County of Westmoreland*, A.D., 1671, has been edited from the original MSS., now in the Bodleian Library, and published by the Cumberland and Westmoreland Archaeological Society. It is the first attempt at the county history that we have. Nor can we omit mention of his *Survey of Westmoreland and Cumberland in 1671*, published by the same Society from MSS. in the possession of Mrs. Dykes, of the Red House, Keswick. Sir Daniel lived before the age of Wordsworth, Turner, and Ruskin. He describes Grasmere thus: “Here is a great lake called Grasmere-Water, which being well stored with grass probably gave name to the place”; and again, “Here, in the midst as it were of a large cockpit is Gresmer Church, being placed in the midst of a level encompassed round with high hills; it is a large building for such a country.” Nor must it be forgotten as we move along through the park towards Pelter Bridge, that the same family gave us the Very Rev. George, D.D.,

Bishop of Carlisle, whose character, if as fine as his face, must indeed have been a beautiful one.

Just opposite Rydal Hall, if we gaze across the valley to the west, we shall see beneath "the crag of the wild goat on Loughrigg," the "Stepping Stones" where lives to-day a grandson of the poet Wordsworth. The house is filled with interesting mementos. Not least among these may be noted that portrait in oil of Dorothy Wordsworth taken in 1833, by a Mr. Crowbent, a self-taught artist, and a native of Cockermouth. She is sitting in a large red chair, and clad in a yellowish brown shawl, with a book of MSS. open on her knee; her left hand holds her old-fashioned spectacles, and on her right hand stands a table with pen and ink, while on the other side is seated on a hassock her favourite white dog of a somewhat poodlish appearance, little "Miss Belle." The face of Dorothy in her 63rd year, for she was born in 1771, is certainly a broader face than one had expected; the eyes—those wonderful grey eyes—are wider apart than one would have thought. But as she sits there in her plain black silk dress, and white frilled grandmother's cap, one can see quiet power and humour in a wise and benevolent face from which the fire, but not the goodness seems to have gone.

There too, in the house, stands Thrupps' bust of the bard; there too, the delicate paintings of Wordsworth and his wife and Dora, by Margaret Gillies. What a finely chiselled face is the face of that latter! One sees how Dora inherited the look of refinement from her mother, though she kept the brow of her father. As to

that portrait of Wordsworth, I confess I never see it without being reminded of a very characteristic incident related to a friend by Miss Gillies herself. She had finished the portrait, and her trunk was packed; the chaise was at the door when, in the silence, she heard the loud booming voice of the bard on the landing upstairs, inquiring of his wife with all solemnity, "My dear, would it be considered very indecorous or profligate if I gave Miss Gillies a kiss at parting?" She did not hear the rejoinder, but supposed that Mrs. Wordsworth had assented. At anyrate she left Rydal Mount with the poet's kiss upon her brow, and a chuckle in her heart.

CHAPTER V

IVY COTTAGE : RYDAL MOUNT : NAB COTTAGE :
WHITE MOSS : DOVE COTTAGE.

THE QUILLINANS : CHARACTERISTICS OF WORDSWORTH : EMERSON :
CARLYLE : HARTLEY COLERIDGE : DE QUINCEY'S
VISIT TO DOVE COTTAGE.

WE cross the Rydal Beck. The old coach days come back upon us as we remember that just here to our right hand stood of old the Smithy, whose "forge hammer with its thumping sound" used to be heard by Wordsworth far up in the Rydal woods. We are now beneath the Rydal Beeches, and at the turn in the road that leads to Rydal Mount, we cannot help noting that the mantle of the simple, water-drinking bard has fallen on the place. Once stood here, at Bank Foot, the village alehouse. But Lancelot Fleming, its owner, heard that soldiers on the march from the North to Kendal were to be billeted on him, and in an evil moment for himself, and a good one for Rydal village, he pulled down the ancient sign and refused to accommodate the soldiery. Squire Fleming

heard of it, the license was taken away, and never again was that sign allowed to be put up. "An' a verra good thing an' aw," says the comely dame who is now the happy tenant of one of the most delightful Westmoreland kitchen-parlours in the neighbourhood.

That worthy dame is not one of the *literati*, but so many times did she as a child walk to school at Ambleside alongside of the poet, in his old blue military cape, who would be "murmuring awt way and not takking a bit o' notish o' nowt"; so often did Miss Dorothy, who was "faculty-struck, poor thing, in those days," promise her a new frock, and repeat her brother's verse of "something about an apple tree"—probably the poem, "The Green Linnet"—in the orchard of Town-End to her; so clearly can she remember how Mrs. Wordsworth, the "wisest, best, and most practical-eyed body as she ever heard of," would don her white apron on baking days, and be "intel the dough in a minute"; so constantly, when Lile Hartley came round to Mr. Carter, the stamp master's clerk, in the little house just below the Mount, at three o'clock in the afternoon, for his jug of home-brewed beer, would she serve him, and watch him dip his hand into the tobacco-jar, that one can hardly help looking upon her as one of the associations with the *literati* of the English Lakes. And we cannot certainly help looking upon her grand old Westmoreland face and self-respectful, self-possessed manner as one of the pleasant associations with a time of noble peasanthood, such as honoured Wordsworth, and was honoured by him.

Before we turn up to the Mount, we may notice,

beyond us, the house now called "Glen Rothay," but in former times Ivy Cottage, which saw the terribly sad death, by fire, of Edward Quillinan's first wife, and knew in old time the Captain Hamilton of Quillinan duel fame, who wrote *Annals of the Peninsular Campaign*, and published in 1827 his one novel, *Cyril Thornton*—a story which was reprinted down to a comparatively recent period. Contributor to *Blackwood* in its palmiest days, as he was, the Captain may fairly be entitled to a place amongst the minor *literati* of Lakeland. He died in 1842.

We turn aside up to Rydal Mount, the last of the four homes of Wordsworth in these dales, and the most beloved one. Hither he came, driven forth by domestic sorrow from the old Grasmere Rectory, in the year 1813. Here he lived till, as his favourite cuckoo-clock struck the hour of noon, upon an April day in 1850—day famous as both the birth-day and death-day of Shakespeare, April 23—with the words upon his lips, "Going to Dora," he died. Yes, "Going to Dora," after three years' separation; "to Dora" the six years' bride, who had entered rest in the year 1847; "Dora" whose death seems to have frozen up the very fountain of his song.

Here, too, a hopeless invalid for the last twenty years of her life, Dorothy Wordsworth in her garden chair murmured snatches of her brother's song, till death gave her back, as we trust, full companionship with the beloved, on 25th January, 1855, she being then in her eighty-third year. And here,

"With an old age serene and bright,
And lovely as a Lapland night,"

did Mary Wordsworth, the poet's wife, linger on in peaceful resignation and content, even though blind for the last three years of her life, until the 17th January, 1859, when her life of calm devotion and unselfish love quietly came to an end.

The house has undergone great alterations, in outside building as in internal decoration. But it is still inhabited by one whose pious thought and kindness keep up the traditions of the place. Sir George Beaumont's pictures of the "White Doe of Rylstone" and the "Thorn" are gone, and the cuckoo-clock is no more, but the ancestral "aumry" brought from Yorkshire, with the initials of early Wordsworths carved upon it, is found within. Out of doors the tall ash tree for the thrush to sing in, the laburnums for the osier cage of the doves, may still be found, and the dark pines still keep sentinel at the gate, though, alas! the "Three Sisters" at Under Mount fell in the November gale of 1893; the lawn is still "a carpet all alive with shadows flung from trees"; the terrace walk Miss Fenwick knew, leads to the little moss-lined shed that may still harbour "a well-contented wren," and just beyond it one passes through the garden gate to the well, beloved by "the water-drinking bard."

We may in fancy easily meet the tan-faced Dorothy coming home swinging her lantern, from over Pelter Bridge, with her brother after dark. We may hear the poet after breakfast booming out his lines in what the old gardener used to call "Master's study," which was the garden, "For ya kna he studied a deal out o' doors and the laadies put it down for 'im, when he coomed iside." We may see him stoop to gather a yellow

poppy or a bit of his favourite Herb-Robert from the garden wall. We may hear the crash of a plate, which Mrs. Wordsworth has ordered to be broken outside his study door, to bring him to his dinner, "for ya kna, Wadsworth was a careful man, varra, and he could nat abide the brekking o' his chiney, and nowt else would sarra to stir 'im, when he was deep i study."

But if I wanted to see Wordsworth at his best, I should go with him and Dora to a cottage, to visit some sufferer, it might be even to pray, and take the last communion with poor Hartley Coleridge, dying at the Nab. Then I should see the same soft light come into his "mild and magnificent eyes," that used to come after long walking in the dales, and over hills breathed on by the west wind full of the salt of the sea, and that mouth so like to Milton's would relax its sternness, and the look of abstraction, that sometimes lent a heaviness to his face, would pass away. It is impossible to say where one had better go if one would meet the poet hard at work upon his poems. Hardly a knoll, or crag, a "feature-some" tree or flower, a rill or waterfall in all the circle of the two vales of Rydal and Grasmere, but during his fifty years was noted by this man, who, as the peasants say, "kenned aw that was stirrin'"; but if I had to choose I should go along by the shepherd's path under Nab Scar to the "Old Corruption Road"¹ to Town End; thence perhaps to the

¹ Dr. Arnold, in joke, gave the names of "Old Corruption," "Bit by Bit Reform," and "Radical Reform," to the three roads from Rydal to Grasmere.

Swan, and Easdale, or else round the lake by Red Bank and Loughrigg Terrace, and so home along the southern side of Rydal Water and the Foot Bridge. Hardly a step in that walk but rings with Wordsworth's music; and there Wordsworth is never alone. Through wind and rain, through sunshine and under stars, Dorothy the devoted, Dorothy the accurate observer of all the subtleties of nature, Dorothy whose wild-flashing eyes saw everything that could touch the heart, Dorothy the poetess, dumb by choice rather than for want of power, walks with him.

Now, how did the poet impress the people of his time and what was he like?

"In imaginative power," says Coleridge, "he (Wordsworth) stands nearest of all modern writers to Shakespeare and Milton."¹ This was high praise from one who once, comparing Goethe and Wordsworth, wrote, "They are not much alike to be sure on the whole; yet they both have this peculiarity of utter non-sympathy with the subjects of their poetry. They are always both of them spectators *ab extrâ*, feeling for, but never with their characters."

"Wordsworth," wrote Christopher North, "has more of the poetical character than any living writer but he is not a man of first-rate intellect, his genius oversets him."²

"I wish," said Southey to his friend John May in 1807, "you would read the Lyrical Ballads of Wordsworth;

¹ *Biographia Literaria*, Vol. II., chap. ix.

² *Christopher North's Life*, Vol. I., p. 199.



RYDAL MOUNT IN WORDSWORTH'S TIME.

some of them are very faulty, but indeed I would sink my whole future fame on the assertion that they will one day be regarded as the first poems in our language. I refer you particularly to *The Brothers*, a poem on *Tintern Abbey*, and *Michael*. Now with Wordsworth," he adds, "I have no intimacy, scarcely any acquaintance. In whatever we resemble each other, the resemblance has sprung, not I believe from chance, but because we have both studied poetry—and indeed it is no light or easy study—in the works of Nature and in the heart of man."

And again Southey wrote to Wynn in 1807: "Have you also seen Wordsworth's new poems? Some are very childish, some very obscure, though not so to me, who understand his opinions; others of first-rate excellence—nothing comparable to them is to be found anywhere except in Shakespeare and Milton. Of this character are most of the sonnets which relate to the times. I never saw poetry at once so truly philosophical and heroic."¹

But how did the man himself impress his contemporaries? Lockhart, who visited Rydal Mount probably in the year 1818, thus describes Wordsworth: "There seemed to me, in his first appearance, something grave almost to austerity, and the deep tones of his voice added strength to that impression of him. There was not visible about him the same easy and disengaged air that so immediately charmed me in Southey—his mind seemed to require an effort to awaken itself thoroughly from some brooding train of thought, and his manner,

¹ *Southey's Life*, Vol. II., p. 15.

as I felt at least, at first reluctantly relaxed into blandness and urbanity.”¹

Lockhart goes on to describe the way in which the pleasant and affectionate talk of the home circle soon dispelled this first impression of severity, and describes the poet's features.

“The features of Wordsworth's face are strong and high, almost harsh and severe—and his eyes have, when he is silent, a dim, thoughtful, I had nearly said melancholy expression—so that when a smile takes possession of his countenance, it is indeed the most powerful smile I ever saw. . . . Never saw I a countenance in which Contemplation so reigns. His brow is very lofty—and his dark brown hair seems worn away, as it were, by thought, so thinly is it spread over his temples.” What Lockhart observed Haydon painted, as every one will allow who has studied the admirable crayon drawing he made of the poet in 1818. In this, quite the most picturesque portrait of him extant, the thinness of the hair above the forehead is very marked. “The colour of his face is almost sallow; but it is not the sallowness of confinement or ill-health, it speaks rather of the rude and boisterous greeting of mountain-weather.”²

Fifteen years after this time, on a certain 28th day of August, 1833, Emerson, fresh from talk with Carlyle on the Scotch hills that looked across the Solway towards “Wordsworth country,” came to Rydal Mount to visit the bard. . . . “The daughters,” Emerson must

¹ *Blackwood's Magazine*, March 1819, “Letters from the Lakes.”

² *Idem*.

mean Dora and her cousin Dorothy, "called in their father, a plain, elderly, white-haired man, not prepossessing, and disfigured by green goggles. He sat down, and talked with great simplicity." . . . Of America and its lack of "a class of men of leisure,—in short, of gentlemen,—to give a tone of honour to the community."¹ He talked of the low tone of the American press, of the need of cultivating the moral, the conservative forces, rather than of appealing to the physical forces in the making of a nation. He spoke of Lucretius as, in his esteem, a higher poet than Virgil; of Carlyle's critical articles and translations, and said he thought him sometimes insane; of Carlyle as obscure, as clever and deep, but as defiant of the sympathies of everybody; he added, that even "Coleridge, whom he had always wished would write more to be understood, was more intelligible than Carlyle."

Then Wordsworth led Emerson out to the terrace path of the garden, on which thousands of his lines have been composed, and asking his American visitor if he would like to hear the sonnets on Fingal's Cave, which he had just written, stood forth and gave them with great animation. The recitation was so unlooked for and surprising, the aged Wordsworth standing apart and reciting on the garden walk like a schoolboy declaiming, that it nigh moved Emerson to laughter, but soon won him to listen soberly and attentively enough.

The old poet showed Emerson the way across the fields to his inn, took him, I suppose, by that favourite

¹ Emerson's *English Traits*, Riverside Edition, pp. 21, 22.

walk of his, the "faintly traced" shepherd's path under Nab Scar, stopping here and there to impress a word or verse, and finally parted with great kindness from his guest. The sum of the impression made on Emerson was, that he was truthful, careless of shining, but harshly limited in thought, with a narrow and very English mind, with opinions of his own but of no value, and was one who paid for his rare elevation, by general tameness and conformity.

And what thought Thomas Carlyle of the Rydal poet? He met him at Henry Taylor's the year after Emerson's visit to Rydal Mount in 1835, and writing to his brother, Dr. John Carlyle, after telling him he had met Southey there, says :—

"At the same house, since that, Jane and I went to meet Wordsworth. I did not expect much, but got mostly what I expected. The old man has a fine shrewdness and naturalness in his expression of face (a long Cumberland figure); one finds also a kind of sincerity in his speech, but for prolixity, thinness, endless dilution, it excels all the other speech I had heard from mortal. A genuine man (which is much), but also essentially, a small genuine man; nothing, perhaps, is sadder (of the glad kind), than the unbounded laudation of such a man; sad proof of the rarity of such. I fancy, however, he has fallen into the garrulity of age, and is not what he was: I fancy that his environment (and rural Prophethood) has hurt him much. He seems impatient that even Shakespeare should be admired: 'so much out of my own pocket!' The shake of hand he gives you is feckless,

egoistical; I rather fancy he loves nothing in the world so much as one could wish. When I compare that man with a great man,—alas, he is like dwindling into contemptibility. Jean Paul (for example), neither was he great, could have worn him as a finger-ring.”

Carlyle’s liver must surely have been out of order when he penned that letter; for we find him giving an account of another meeting with the Laureate about five years later, at a certain tavern in St. James’ Street, on a balmy, calm, and sunny morning in 1840, where were assembled at Taylor’s bidding, James Spedding and other four or five “polite, intelligent, quiet persons” to greet Wordsworth then just come to town.

The liver was probably in better order now, sunlight most likely helping thereto, for the Chelsea sage remembered that the “breakfast was pleasant, fairly beyond the common of such things.”¹ He remembered too that the robust veteran of Rydal, then in his 71st year, “talked well in his way; with veracity, easy brevity and force, as a wise tradesman would of his tools and workshop,—and as no unwise one could. His voice was good, frank, sonorous, though practically clear, distinct, and forcible rather than melodious; the tone of him businesslike, sedately confident; no discourtesy, yet no anxiety about being courteous. A fine wholesome rusticity, fresh as his mountain breezes, sat well on the stalwart veteran, and on all he said and did. You would have said he was a usually taciturn man; glad to unlock himself to audience sympathetic and intelligent, when such offered

¹ *Carlyle’s Reminiscences*, Vol. II., p. 332.

itself. His face bore marks of much, not always peaceful, meditation; the look of it not bland or benevolent so much as close, impregnable, and hard: a man *multa tacre loquive paratus*, in a world where he had experienced no lack of contradictions as he strode along! The eyes were not very brilliant, but they had a quiet clearness; there was enough of brow, and well shaped; rather too much of cheek ('horse face' I have heard satirists say); face of squarish shape and decidedly longish, as I think the head itself was (its 'length' going horizontal); he was large-boned, lean, but still firm-knit, tall and strong looking when he stood, a right good old steel-grey figure, with rustic simplicity and dignity about him, and a vivacious strength looking through him."¹

It is impossible to get a clearer view of what the Poet looked like in his later day than this, and those who, with Carlyle's words in mind, will gaze at the portrait of him by "Wyon," prefixed to Knight's last edition of *Wordsworth and the Lake Country*, will be able to see the robust veteran in his rustic dignity face to face.

Nor can one omit mention of that little last glimpse which Carlyle got of the Poet at a certain dinner at Lord Monteagle's—"large, luminous, sumptuous"—and which stayed by Carlyle so vividly that, more than twenty years after, he could have painted it. Wordsworth carried in his pocket a kind of a skeleton brass candlestick, in which he touched a spring, and there flitted out a small vertical green shade, which he then placed between his

¹ *Carlyle's Reminiscences*, Vol. II., p. 333.

poor weak eyes and the neighbouring candles. Carlyle had evidently got to care for the man, and ever remembered with pleasure that the tone of the poet's voice when he was once fairly "afloat on some Cumberland or other matter germane to him, had a braced rustic vivacity, willingness, and solid precision"¹ about it. But that night of the dinner party he sat a long way from Wordsworth, and the Lion of the Lion-dinner, had he roared, would have had his voice swallowed up in the "cackle as of Babel, . . . which, far up in Wordsworth's quarter, . . . seemed to have taken a sententious, rather louder, logical and quasi-scientific turn, heartily unimportant to gods and men," which had taken possession of the dessert hour. "I looked upwards," says Carlyle, the coast being luckily clear, "there, far off, beautifully screened in the shadow of his vertical green circle, which was on the farther side of him, sate Wordsworth, silent, slowly but steadily gnawing some portion of what I judged to be raisins, with his eye and attention placidly fixed on these and these alone. The sight of whom, and of his rock-like indifference to the babble, quasi-scientific and other, with attention turned on the small practical alone, was comfortable and amusing to me, who felt like him but could not eat raisins."²

It was just this rock-like indifference to the babble, that made it possible for Wordsworth to "work out his high calling" from start to goal. It was the simplicity of the man that made him able, all unconscious the while, to be himself at that sumptuous, luminous, lion dinner-party;

¹ *Carlyle's Reminiscences*, Vol. II., p. 339.

² *Idem*, p. 340.

to dream of the silence of the Rydal woods, and quiet of Rydal Mere, and to be back in thought at his frugal repast at Rydal Mount, among all things sincere for all the disquiet and cackle of Babel that London's brightest assembly could produce.

"The strongest of my impressions respecting Wordsworth," said Aubrey de Vere, who saw him eight years before he died, "was that made by the manly simplicity and lofty rectitude which characterised him."

"A true man who truly had served the lyre."

And here is the impression that Wordsworth made upon the yeomen and peasants in the dales. "Nivver a man of many words ye kna, but quite monstrable wi' his own barns at times; I darsay he wud tak em out in a string and nivver say nowt to nin on em at times, but then he was quite an 'object man,' quite a 'kenspeckled' one, as we saay, ratherly rough-feaced an aw, girt big faace wi' out much plesser i' it and vara plaainly drest at best o' times. Nivver a man as laughed not to saay laugh reight owt, but a decent quiet man, well spokken on by his sarvants at t' Mount, terble kind to fowks as was badly and very highly thowt on; paid his way reglar, vara particler an aw about his accounts, and that was Mrs. Wordsworth's doin ye kna, for she was a reglar manasher. Turble fond o' study ont' rroads, specially at night time, an wi' a girt voice bumming awaay fit to flayte aw the childer to death ameaast, not but what Miss Dorothy did best part o' putting his potry togidder.



DORA'S FIELD.

He let it fa' and she cam efter and gethered it oop fur him ye kna. Quite yan o' us ye kna, not a bit o' pride in him, for o quality thowte ot warld on 'im. But he wasn't a man as was thowte a deal o' for his potry when he was hereabout. It hed no laugh in it same as Lile Hartley's, bided a deal o makkin I darsay. It was kept oer long in his heead mappen. But then for aw that, he had best eye to mountains and trees, and buildins i' t' daale, notished ivvry stean o' the fellside, and we nin on us durst bang a bowder stean to bits or cut a bit copy or raave an old wa' doon when *he* was astir."

It was "Mr. Wadswuth stamp-maister, him o' Rydal," not Wordsworth Poet-Laureate, they knew. Indeed one yeoman who went some miles out of his way to attend a political meeting at Appleby, attracted by the announcement that the Poet-Laureate would address the meeting, was heard to say, "Schaff on it, its nobbut old Wadsworth o' Rydal efter aw!" and left the meeting in high dudgeon.

As for his poetry, it was "aw reet eneuf but queer stuff, varra," and they hardly believed that when the fit of making it was on, Wordsworth was in his right mind. They heard him "bumming away," they saw his "jaws a gaain t' whoale time" and thought of him as possessed, and would say, "Aw yes, I darsay he's quite sensible, whiles, if ya nobbut catch him reet he'll talk as plaain as eyder you or me," and they were to be pardoned if they looked on his periodical poetry-making on the public highway as periodical fits of

mania. Thus it came to pass, as Dr. Gibson has chronicled for us, that when one day Hartley Coleridge made his wonted appearance at an artist friend's studio at Ambleside and was accosted with the ordinary salutation of "Well Mr. Coleridge, what's your news this morning?" Hartley replied, "Your enquiry reminds me of the answer I've just had to the same: as I was walking down, I came upon a poor man from Rydal breaking stones, and like you I said, 'Good morning, John, what news have you this morning?' and John answered, 'Why, nowte varry particler only ald Wadsworth's brocken lowce ageean.'"

But for all this Wordsworth hereabouts was a figure-head amongst men, not understood as a poet, but honoured for his uprightness and integrity, his simplicity, his kindness, and his piety, and looked upon as a man of practical judgment in all that concerned home affairs in the dale. A worthy "volunteer," a trusted justice of the Peace, whilst as for his wealthier neighbours, the pattern of high thinking and plain living he set was a kind of moral tonic for the whole district.

We leave Rydal Mount, we pass Nab Cottage, whence in 1816 De Quincey took his fair wife, Margaret Simpson. Those lovers doubtless have oft-times sat beneath the roses in the quaint little garden by the road, where in later years she lived for a time, driven from Town End by books and bairns, and there between the years 1837 and 1849, dwelt Hartley Coleridge under the care of Richardson and his good wife Eleanor, loving and beloved. I have often talked with Richardson of those old days,

and his eyes would almost fill with tears as he spoke of Hartley's end.

"Ya kna," he would say, "Lile Hartley was as manashable as a bairn, and was a bairn that needed manashing until the end." He did not know that years before he had been described as having "a young lamb's heart among the full grown flocks," but he did know how "Lile Hartley" was welcome at every cottage door for miles round, and how while "Mr. Wadsworth's potry hedn't a bit o' laugh in it, and was kept ower long in his head," Hartley's was made as he trotted along by the brooks, was popped down upo' paper at the first open door, and was gaily well liket by a vast of fowk crack-ing over a pint of yaale." "Cliverest man i' England as some say, and did a deal to help Mr. Wadsworth out with his potry and all."

Never had poet faithfuller henchman, or tenderer host than this gentle-hearted and appreciative Richardson, brother of the headmaster of Appleby Grammar School, himself a great admirer of Hartley and a chronicler of his genius. He passed to his rest in the Spring of the year 1892, but to the last he thought of Hartley Coleridge, and those days at the Nab.

We go forward with pictures in our mind of De Quincey under some terrible nightmare of pursuing serpents scudding along the road, of Hartley stopping stock-still to mutter half audibly the line of a sonnet he is making, then dashing on at express speed, stick over shoulder, to the terror of the children. Or of the solemn Wordsworth and his wife and sister-in-law bound for

their favourite seat on the "Sara and Mary crags," this side of "Brother John's Grove." Or we see him and the tan-faced sister Dorothy sauntering along above us, on the little hoary line of footpath beneath Nab Scar, to take their usual round by the two lakes,

"If it be some first glad day of March,
Each moment lovelier than before,"

or happy in some

"genial hour,
When universal nature breathed
As with the breath of one sweet flower,—
A time to over-rule the power
Of discontent."¹

And should it chance that near the quarry, at the foot of the White Moss roads, we meet a beggar woman with her merry boys at play, we shall probably be won to break our rules of charity organisation and give; for here at the favourite gypsy camping ground, beside the road at the quarry, sat Dorothy, all the morning of March 13, 1802, taking down that poem *The Beggars*, which Wordsworth there composed on the tall Egyptian-faced tinker's wife and her happy bairns, with their ass, all of whom Dorothy had seen two years before along this road.

Away to our left is the little cape jutting into Rydal Water, sacred to the memory of Coleridge as well as of Dorothy and William, that gave the poet his theme for the poem *Point Rash Judgment*. Just above us, on the right, is the "Glow Worm" or "Primrose Rock" associated with his muse.

¹ *Sequel to the Beggars*, p. 569.

We have a choice of routes now ; we can go along the main high road, which, as mentioned above, Dr. Arnold called "Radical Reform," and gain a sudden surprise view of Grasmere Lake with its own island, almost its own sky ; can skirt those twin peaks where two adventurous sisters used to climb

"And took no note of the hour while thence they gazed,
The blooming heath their couch";¹

can at the corner of the road see in our fancy how Wordsworth, skilled in the craft of name-cutting upon stone, is chiselling out

"Some uncouth name upon the native rock,
Above the Rotha, by the forest side,"²

and hear how, while the echo of Joanna's laugh rings through the vale,

"Hammer Scar
And the tall Steep of Silver-How, sent forth
A noise of laughter ; southern Loughrigg heard,
And Fairfield answered with a mountain tone."³

We shall hardly bless the road contractor for having thus at Penny Rock dispossessed with thunder of his blasting powder the merry crag that once

"like something starting from a sleep,
Took up the Lady's voice, and laughed again,"⁴

and almost wish that as of yore the little pack-horse path from Town End had left this eastern shore of Grasmere Lake "safe in its own privacy."

But we will hie back to the quarry and ascend the

¹ *Forth from a Jutting Ridge*, p. 786. ² *To Joanna*, p. 142.

³ *Idem*.

⁴ *Idem*, p. 142.

latter road, the "Bit by Bit Reform"; we may hear "the music of immortality" sound from the "Primrose Rock" beside the way; may listen to the moaning in the fir-tree tops for absent Brother John, or leaning at the Wishing-Gate may gather heart of hope for there

"Hope rules a land for ever green.

.
 "Yea! even the Stranger from afar,
 Reclining on the moss-grown bar
 Unknowing and unknown,
 The infection of the ground partakes."¹

And here too, much in thought of that sailor brother of the Bard who so loved this place, we may chance to meet the beggar woman who herself had borne a sailor son, "The Sailor's Mother," of whom the Poet wrote:—

"Majestic in her person, tall and straight;
 And like a Roman matron's was her mien and gait,

"The ancient spirit is not dead;
 Old times, thought I, are breathing there:
 Proud was I that my country bred
 Such strength, a dignity so fair:
 She begged an alms, like one in poor estate:
 I looked at her again, nor did my pride abate."²

White Moss Common is associated with all wild life that loves the open air, all wanderers under sun and under cloud. For here beside the "pool, bare to the eye of Heaven," near the old pack-horse road, or on the middle heath once

"Motionless as a cloud the old Man stood,
 That heareth not the loud winds when they call,"³

¹ *The Wishing-Gate*, p. 662.

² *The Sailor's Mother*, p. 167.

³ *Resolution and Independence*, p. 175.

of whom Wordsworth has given so faithful a portrait in his poem *Resolution and Independence*.

But it is not of the "Leech gatherer" alone that we think as we pass over White Moss. We remember how here at the earliest dawn of a fine summer's morning in 1810, De Quincey saw "a bull, apparently flying from some unseen enemy in his rear." We quote the Opium-Eater's own words. "As yet, however, all is mystery; but suddenly three horsemen double a turn in the road, and come flying into sight with the speed of a hurricane, manifestly in pursuit of the fugitive bull. The bull labours to navigate his huge bulk to the moor; which he reaches, and then pauses, panting and blowing out clouds of smoke from his nostrils, to look back from his station amongst rocks and slippery crags upon his hunters. . . . The horsemen, scarcely relaxing their speed, charge up the hill, and, speedily gaining the rear of the bull, drive him at a gallop over the worst part of that impracticable ground down into the level ground below. At this point of time the stranger perceives by the increasing light of the morning, that the hunters are armed with immense spears fourteen feet long. With these the bull is soon dislodged; and, scouring down to the plain below, he and the hunters at his tail take to the common at the head of the lake, and all, in the madness of the chase, are soon half-engulphed in the swamps of the morass. After plunging together for ten or fifteen minutes, all suddenly regain the *terra firma*, and the bull again makes for the rocks. Up to this moment there had been the silence of ghosts; and the stranger had doubted whether the spectacle were not

a pageant of ærial spectres, ghostly huntsmen, ghostly lances, and a ghostly bull. But just at this crisis a voice (it was the voice of Mr. Wilson) shouted aloud, 'Turn the villain; turn that villain; or he will take to Cumberland!' The young stranger did the service required of him, the villain was turned and fled southwards: the hunters, lance in rest, rushed after him; all bowed their thanks as they fled past; the fleet cavalcade again took the high road; they doubled the cape which shut them out of sight; and in a moment all had disappeared and left the quiet valley to its original silence."¹

We may wonder at the boisterous madcap frolic of that glorious backwoodsman, "Christopher North"; but after all a bull-hunt was better than the bull-baiting that was still hardly out of fashion in our North Country at the time of this famous bull chase. I have conversed, as late as 1893, with an old man who remembers the little black bulls bred for the purpose at Crab-tree Hall, Braithwaite, which he used to see dragged on occasion to the bull-ring in the Keswick Market-place. To go and "shek t' bull-ring" was a proverbial expression in his day for giving a challenge to anyone to fight—equivalent "to throwing down the glove."

But we are grateful for the silence of White Moss to-day, undisturbed either by shout of the hunter, or blasting thunder of the Manchester Water-Works operations, and on, "in meditation undisturbed," we stroll towards that little house, now almost hidden from the passer-by, beside its two yew-trees, which at Town-end

¹ *De Quincey's Works*, ed. by Masson—"Biographies and Biographic Sketches,"—Vol. V., pp. 269-270.



THE WISHING GATE.

once proffered hospitality to Wordsworth's "Waggoner" and all others that called at the bottom of the hill that leads from White Moss. Up here at White Moss, in the house to the right of us as we begin to descend the "brow," Dr. Cradock, late Principal of Brasenose, for years spent some of his vacation—as true a student of Wordsworth as we have had in this last fifty years. I wish he could have been alive and with us to-day, to tell us of the poet, as we enter the "Dove and Olive Bough" that in the latter part of last century offered

"A greeting of good ale
To all who entered Grasmere Vale."

It offers a better greeting now, for it offers us a monument of plain living and high thinking, such as perhaps can nowhere else be found; and it will continue to offer it, for it is now, thanks to Mr. Stopford Brooke and his brother's enthusiasm, property in trust for the nation.

"To this lovely cottage in its garden nook
Whose very flowers are sacred to the poor."¹

came Wordsworth and his sister Dorothy in December, 1799. Here they planted memories of their mountain rambles—

"Bringing thee chosen plants and blossoms blown,
Among the distant mountains, flower and weed."²

Here they carved out steps from the living rock; here trimmed their tiny fountain-head with flowers, and made this

"the calmest, fairest spot of earth,
With all its unappropriated good,
My own."³

¹ Knight's *Life of Wordsworth*, Vol. III., p. 234.

² *A Farewell*, p. 177.

³ *The Recluse*, p. 335.

Entering it we remember how Wordsworth, when he went to bring his wife home—as bride—in 1802, spoke of it thus—

“O happy garden! whose seclusion deep
Hath been so friendly to industrious hours.”¹

And the garden well deserved that name, for there from St. Thomas' Day, December 21, 1799, till May, 1808, the Poet poured forth his music and gave his best of song, as steadily as the little neighbouring rill poured forth sweet life to the daffodils, and the birds gave forth their May-tide carollings. The second volume of *Lyrical Ballads*, some of the *Prelude*, some of the *Excursion*, the *Ode on the Intimations of Immortality*, and the *White Doe of Rylstone*, were among the writings composed in that

“Sweet garden-orchard, eminently fair,”²

or murmured out to the “flapping of the flame of his half-parlour and half-kitchen fire.”

Great guests were the guests of Town End in those days—Charles Lloyd, Coleridge, Southey, Charles Lamb, Sir Walter Scott, and Humphrey Davy hither came and went. There came one other, who stayed—De Quincey, who in November, 1809, “at last made his appearance,” and entered upon tenancy of Dove Cottage, where, he says, “I was to succeed the illustrious tenant Wordsworth, who had in my mind hallowed the rooms” by a seven years' occupation during perhaps the happiest period of his life.³ In this cottage he first beheld with trembling

¹ *A Farewell*, p. 178.

² *Idem*, p. 177.

³ *De Quincey's Works*, ed. by Masson—“Reminiscences of the Lakes,” Chap. VII.

awe Wordsworth, restless Dorothy, and tranquil Mary, the poet's wife; "Cottage, immortal in my remembrance," says he, as well it might be, "for this cottage I retained through just seven-and-twenty years; this was the scene of struggle, the most tempestuous and bitter within my own mind; this the scene of my despondency and unhappiness; this the scene of my happiness." ¹

Here upon the settle in the flagged half-kitchen and half-parlour has Coleridge the philosopher, way-worn after "out-watching the bear" in deep converse with his friend, often slumbered till the morn. The little room adjacent is Dorothy's bedroom, where many a time she listened pitifully to sleepless William tossing and moaning overhead. As we go upstairs we see through the open door the tiny kitchen. On the stair landing we may look at the little room De Quincey added for accommodation of his books. We may visit the small guest chamber, Wordsworth's plainly furnished bedroom over Dorothy's and the drawing-room-and-study-in-one, next door, which held in its recesses, either side the fire, books of reference, and are much as they were when the Poet murmured out his music, and his goodwife worked at her bead-mats and worsted-worked chair bottoms beside him. While, if you went into the little garden ground, you would see Dorothy hanging out the newly-washed clothes to dry, or plucking an apron full of the scarlet-runner beans she had trailed against the house wall to give it

¹ *De Quincey's Works*, ed. by Masson—"Reminiscences of the Lakes," Chap. VII.

beauty, or seated with William in the arbour reducing his verse to writing.

De Quincey's description of his first impression of Dove Cottage and its inhabitants is so interesting that we transcribe it. He was acting as cicerone for S. T. Coleridge just returned from Malta, and was embarrassed by finding that Coleridge had been engaged to lecture at the Royal Institute in Albermarle Street, at the very time his family needed him to convey them from Hot Wells, Bristol, to Greta Hall, Keswick. This was in the summer of 1807. De Quincey had undertaken to see the family home, and travelled by post-chaise to the North with Mrs. Coleridge, her boys—Hartley, aged nine, Derwent about seven—and her beautiful little daughter Sara, nearly five.

"About four o'clock we found ourselves," writes De Quincey, "on the summit of the White Moss. . . . In ascending this hill, from weariness of moving so slowly, I, with the two Coleridges, had alighted; and, as we all chose to refresh ourselves by running down the hill into Grasmere, we had left the chaise behind us, and had even lost the sound of the wheels at times, when all at once we came, at an abrupt turn of the road, in sight of a white cottage, with two yew-trees breaking the glare of its white walls. A sudden shock seized me on recognising this cottage, of which, in the previous year, I had gained a momentary glimpse from Hammerscar, on the opposite side of the lake. I paused, and felt my old panic returning upon me; but just then, as if to take away all doubt upon the subject, I saw Hartley Coleridge,

who had gained upon me considerably, suddenly turn in at a garden gate; this motion to the right at once confirmed me in my belief that here at last we had reached our port; that this little cottage was tenanted by that man whom, of all the men from the beginning of time, I most fervently desired to see; that in less than a minute I should meet Wordsworth face to face. Coleridge was of opinion that, if a man were really and *consciously* to see an apparition, in such circumstances death would be the inevitable result. . . . Judged by Coleridge's test, my situation could not have been so terrific as *his* who anticipates a ghost; for certainly I surmised this meeting, but at that instant it seemed pretty much the same to my own feelings. . . .

"Through the little gate I pressed forward; ten steps beyond it lay the principal door of the house. To this, no longer clearly conscious of my own feelings, I passed on rapidly; I heard a step, a voice, and, like a flash of lightning, I saw the figure emerge of a tallish man, who held out his hand and saluted me with most cordial expressions of welcome. The chaise, however, drawing up to the gate at that moment, he (and there needed no Roman nomenclator to tell me that this *he* was Wordsworth) felt himself summoned to advance and receive Mrs. Coleridge. I, therefore, stunned almost with the actual accomplishment of a catastrophe so long anticipated and so long postponed, mechanically went forward into the house. A little semi-vestibule between two doors prefaced the entrance into what might be considered the principal room of the cottage. It was an oblong square,

not above eight and a half feet high, sixteen feet long, and twelve broad; very prettily wainscoted from the floor to the ceiling with dark polished oak, slightly embellished with carving. One window there was—a perfect unpretending cottage window, and with little diamond panes, embowered at almost every season of the year with roses, and, in the summer and autumn, with a profusion of jasmine and other fragrant shrubs.¹ From the exuberant luxuriance of the vegetation around it, and from the dark hue of the wainscoting, this window, though tolerably large, did not furnish a very powerful light to one who entered from the open air. However, I saw sufficiently to be aware of two ladies just entering the room through a doorway opening upon a little staircase. The foremost, a tallish young woman, with the most winning expression of benignity upon her features, advanced to me, presenting her hand with so frank an air that all embarrassment must have fled in a moment before the native goodness of her manner. This was Mrs. Wordsworth, cousin of the poet;² and, for the last five years or more, his wife. She was now mother of two children, a son and a daughter; and she furnished a remarkable proof how possible it is for a woman neither handsome nor even comely according to rigour of criticism—nay, generally pronounced very plain—to exercise all the practical fascination of beauty, through the mere compensatory charms of sweetness all but angelic, of simplicity

¹ The Dove Cottage Committee have restored the window and wainscoted the walls.

² This was a mistake of De Quincey's. See footnote, p. 7.

the most entire, womanly self-respect and purity of heart speaking through all her looks, acts, and movements. *Words*, I was going to have added, but her words were few. In reality she talked so little that Mr. Slave-Trade Clarkson used to allege against her that she could only say, 'God bless you !' Certainly her intellect was not of an active order ; but in a quiescent, reposing, meditative way, she appeared always to have a genial enjoyment from her own thoughts ; and it would have been strange, indeed, if she, who enjoyed such eminent advantages of training, from the daily society of her husband and his sister, failed to acquire some power of judging for herself, and putting forth some functions of activity. But undoubtedly that was not her element : to feel and to enjoy in a luxurious repose of mind—there was her *forte* and her peculiar privilege. . . . Her figure was tolerably good. In complexion she was fair, and there was something peculiarly pleasing even in this accident of the skin, for it was accompanied by an animated expression of health, a blessing which, in fact, she possessed uninterruptedly. Her eyes, the reader may already know, were

' Like stars of Twilight fair ;
Like Twilight's too, her dark brown hair ;
But all things else about her drawn
From May-time and the cheerful dawn.'

"Immediately behind her," continues De Quincey, "moved a lady, shorter, slighter, and perhaps in all other respects as different from her in personal characteristics as could have been wished for the most

effective contrast, 'Her face was of Egyptian brown'; rarely, in a woman of English birth, had I seen a more determinate gipsy tan. Her eyes were not soft, as Mrs. Wordsworth's, nor were they fierce or bold; but they were wild and startling, and hurried in their motion. Her manner was warm and even ardent; her sensibility seemed constitutionally deep; and some subtle fire of impassioned intellect apparently burned within her, which, being alternately pushed forward into a conspicuous expression by the irrepressible instincts of her temperament, and then immediately checked, in obedience to the decorum of her sex and age and her maidenly condition, gave to her whole demeanour and to her conversation an air of embarrassment, and even of self-conflict, that was almost distressing to witness. Even her very utterance and enunciation often suffered, in point of clearness and steadiness, from the agitation of her excessive organic sensibility. At times the self-counteraction and self-baffling of her feelings caused her even to stammer, and so determinately to stammer, that a stranger who should have seen her and quitted her in that state of feeling would have certainly set her down for one plagued with that infirmity of speech as distressingly as Charles Lamb himself. This was Miss Wordsworth, the only sister of the poet—his 'Dorothy'; . . . she it was—the lady who paced by his side continually through sylvan and mountain tracks, in Highland glens, and in the dim recesses of German charcoal-burners—that first *couched* his eye to the sense of beauty, humanised him by the gentler charities, and engrafted



PORTRAIT OF DE QUINCEY.

with her delicate female touch, those graces upon the ruder growths of his nature, which have since clothed the forest of his genius with a foliage corresponding in loveliness and beauty to the strength of its boughs and the massiness of its trunks. The greatest deductions from Miss Wordsworth's attractions, and from the exceeding interest which surrounded her in right of her character, of her history, and of the relation which she fulfilled towards her brother, were the glancing quickness of her motions and other circumstances in her deportment (such as her stooping attitude when walking) which gave an ungraceful, and even an unsexual character to her appearance when out-of-doors. She did not cultivate the graces which preside over the person and its carriage. But, on the other hand, she was a person of very remarkable endowments intellectually; and, in addition to the other great services which she rendered to her brother, this I may mention as greater than all the rest, and it was one which equally operated to the benefit of every casual companion in a walk,—viz., the exceeding sympathy, always ready and always profound, by which she made all that one could tell her, all that one could describe, all that one could quote from a foreign author, reverberate, as it were, *a plusieurs reprises*, to one's own feelings, by the manifest impression it made upon *hers*. The pulses of light are not more quick or more inevitable in their flow and undulation, than were the answering and echoing movements of her sympathising attention. Her knowledge of literature was irregular, and thoroughly unsystematic.

She was content to be ignorant of many things ; but what she knew and had really mastered lay where it could not be disturbed—in the temple of her own most fervid heart. . . .

“I was ushered up a little flight of stairs, fourteen in all, to a little drawing-room, or whatever the reader chooses to call it. Wordsworth himself has described the fire-place¹ of this room as his

‘Half-kitchen and half-parlour fire.’

It was not fully seven feet six inches high, and, in other respects, pretty nearly of the same dimensions as the rustic hall below. There was, however, in a small recess, a library of perhaps three hundred volumes, which seemed to consecrate the room as the poet’s study and composing room ; and such occasionally it was. But far oftener he both studied, as I found, and composed, on the high road. I had not been two minutes at the fireside, when in came Wordsworth. . . .

“Charles Lamb bore age with less disadvantage to the intellectual expression of his appearance than Wordsworth, in whom a sanguine complexion had, of late years usurped upon the original bronze tint ; and this change of hue and change in the quality of skin had been made fourfold more conspicuous, and more unfavourable in its general effect, by the harsh contrast of grizzled hair which had displaced the original brown. No change in personal appearance ever can have been so unfortunate ; for, generally speaking, whatever other disadvantages old

¹ It is probable that De Quincey is wrong, and the poet may have been describing the fire-place in the lower room first entered.

age may bring along with it, one effect, at least in male subjects, has a compensating tendency—that it removes any tone of vigour too harsh, and mitigates the expression of power too unsubdued. But, in Wordsworth the effect of the change has been to substitute an air of animal vigour, or, at least, hardness, as if derived from constant exposure to the wind and weather, for the fine sombre complexion which he once wore, resembling that of a Venetian senator or a Spanish monk.”

We say farewell to this “little nook of mountain ground,” secure for ever now “from rash assault,” and restored as far as may be to its pristine simplicity; and leaving Town End we pass along by the field of Barbara Lewthwaite’s father, whose fair inhabitant impelled Wordsworth to write those touching verses, *The Pet Lamb*. The music of that poem, in spite of the fun that Hartley Coleridge made of it, like the music of the rustling corn it speaks of, is ever in our ears. But times are changed; no rye gleams upon the Rydal slopes, and waves of shadow go over no wheat in the Grasmere Vale.

CHAPTER VI

BEN PLACE : LANCRIGG : ALLAN BANK : GRASMERE CHURCH
AND CHURCHYARD : RED BANK : FIELD HOUSE :
ESTHWAITE HALL : HAWKSHEAD :
CONISTON ; BRANTWOOD

EDWARD THRING : MRS. FLETCHER : SIR JOHN RICHARDSON :
PORTRAIT OF WILSON : MATTHEW ARNOLD AND CLOUGH :
JOHN WORDSWORTH : DR. SANDYS : WORDSWORTH
AT HAWKSHEAD : ELIZABETH SMITH : GERALD
MASSEY : JOHN RUSKIN.

WE go now by way of the Swan Inn towards Grasmere and the River Rotha, for we are bound for Lancrigg and Easedale. But, as we gaze up the deep hollow in Fairfield's bosom, where

"Beside the brook
Appears a straggling heap of unhewn stones,"¹

We remember the sorrow of Michael, the old shepherd, who, as he toiled at his sheepfold, passed some days in such grief that he "never lifted up a single stone."² Here, too, we cannot but glance at Ben Place, whither

¹ *Michael*, p. 131.

² *Idem*, p. 137.

for fourteen years came Edward Thring—the most heroic and most original schoolmaster since the days of Thomas Arnold, and a true poet—to spend his holidays in commune with “the soul that runs through all things”; and whether he wandered up Easedale, or wrestled with wind and rain upon the mountain top, or saw in the fair pavilion of the clouds God’s power and love enshrined, he never tired of translating the life of man into the life of nature, and of making the trees and rocks and streams and waterfalls speak with human language.

I read with constant pleasure the forcible verse wherein he describes the mountain streamlet’s birth and ending, and know that in him the Tongue Ghyll Waterfall found an eye and heart that could most accurately portray the noble deathlessness of a stream, which willingly loses its life at the Fall, beneath the rainbow banner of Hope, and finds it pure, unsullied, and calm again, beyond its perilous leap and painful passage.

We now pass round the burial place of Butha the Leaper, Butterlyp-How of our day, by Rotha’s amber stream, to Lancrigg. There has been some rain, and Rotha after rain flows amber to the Lake. Wordsworth’s *Poems on the Naming of Places* are in our minds, and Dorothy is with us. There, under Helm Crag, nestles the well-beloved house of constant welcome to the Poet, which the beautiful Mrs. Fletcher built or enlarged, on the site of old Rowlandson’s farm cottage, in the year 1840. The little rocky well, the old grey stone close by, which the “concentred hazels” enclose, and which is protected from “the ray of noontide suns,” may be

found, but the trees are much grown since the time when William Wordsworth used to walk along the woodland terrace path to get his double view of mountain wildness and of valley calm. Yon "intack" is the Tom intack; but the hollies which Wordsworth and Mrs. Fletcher sowed in 1841 "for posterity" have flourished, and much altered its appearance, and many peeps obtained in the old times of Boothwaite meadow and the hill beyond, have now been obscured by Woodland growth.

One cannot move along the terrace-walk at Lancrigg without a thought that Wordsworth and his sister Dorothy found out the delight of wandering here, within four days of their first coming into the Grasmere Vale; and that the beauty of this quiet place, known as "Under Lancrigg," passed also into the quiet beauty of *The Prelude*, which he composed largely here.

Mrs. Fletcher, whose face can never fade from the minds of those who know Richmond's portrait, though not known in literature save for her interesting biography, was still no unremarkable figure among the *literati* of her time; not only honoured by the Lake Poets and their friends as critic and counsellor, but honouring, and honoured by, the cause of Liberty, at home and abroad. Mazzini was her fast friend, she, a devoted disciple. And when in 1858 death came to end for her the burden of her eighty-ninth year, she left behind her a record of unselfish love for the best and noblest of our English literature. To her, as successor in possession of Lancrigg, succeeded a man whose fine face, constant philanthropy and benevolence are well remembered in the person of

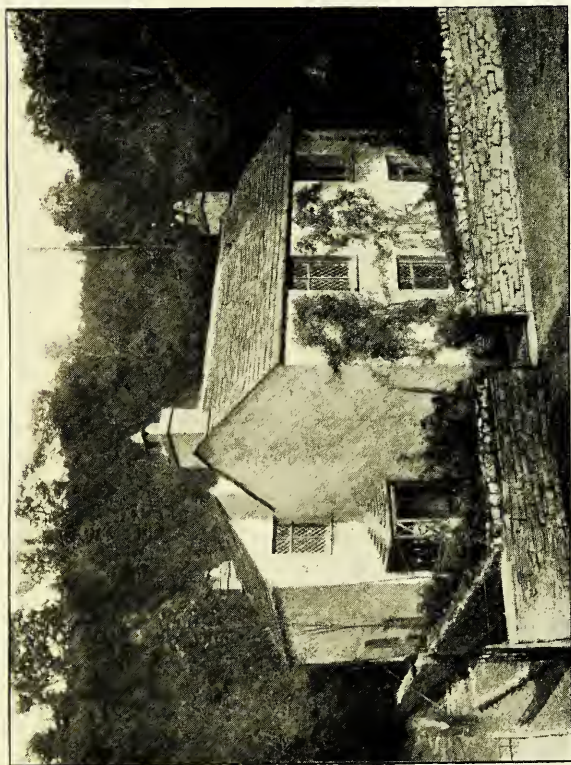
her son-in law, Sir John Richardson, likely to be remembered by all who care for the fate of Arctic explorers. And though as kin to his friend, Sir John Franklin, one may be tempted to speak with bias here, one cannot but think that "The Chronicle" Sir John Richardson gave the world of his Arctic Sledge expedition, its awful privations and terrible adventures, will rank him among the most graphic writers of travel, and will always find readers as long as Englishmen care to see how Englishmen do the duty their country expects of them, in hours of danger and difficulty.

We leave Lancrigg; the lovely face of Lady Richardson, who lived on here till 1880,—her sweet and solemn dignity of manner,—her enthusiasm for the School of Lake Poets—fresh in mind, and so back to Grasmere by way of Allan Bank; but as we go, we remember that we are indebted to her for much knowledge of Wordsworth. To the intercourse of Lady Richardson with the Rydalian bard is owed many a touch, descriptive of his real character, many an interesting note of the localities made famous by his poetic labour. For example, walking with Lady Richardson in December of 1843, on the terrace walk at Lancrigg, he said,—“This is a stirring anniversary to me; for this day forty-four years ago, my sister and I took up our abode at Grasmere, and three days after we found out this walk, which long remained our favourite haunt.” Lady Richardson adds, “it was their custom to spend the fine days of summer in the open air, chiefly in the valley of Easedale. *The Prelude* was chiefly composed on a green mountain

terrace on the Easedale side of Helm Crag, a place which he used to say he knew by heart. The ladies sat with their work on the hillside, while he walked to and fro on the smooth green mountain turf, humming out his verses to himself, and then repeating them to his sympathising and ready scribes to be noted down on the spot and transcribed at home." So wrote the lady of Lancrigg, and as long as men read of "Wordsworth's grave," they will be grateful to the pen that has left behind in *Sharpe's London Magazine* the faithful and touching record of the Poet's funeral;—and will ask where Lady Richardson, his friend, lies buried in the old churchyard beside the reflux Rotha.

To Allan Bank, William Wordsworth, as first tenant, came in the Spring of 1808 from Dove Cottage at Town End, now too small for him and his growing family, and here, till the Spring of 1811, he stayed. One thinks of him as working at his *Excursion* here, interrupted not unfrequently by the torrent of talk that his guest S. T. Coleridge sometimes indulged in, or the boisterous wit of Mr. Wilson of Elleray, come over for a crack and a laugh.

We have just been gazing on the portrait by Duncan of the "Professor" in his shooting jacket, there, in the drawing-room at Lancrigg. Huge of stature, bare of head, bare-chested with wide-open shirt he stands, using his gun as a kind of walking staff in his right hand, his great limbs, for all the absurdity of thin slippered feet and white nankeen or sailor's white duck continuations, giving an idea of tremendous strength. One does



DOVE COTTAGE.

not wonder that to Miss Martineau's eyes he seemed a very earth-giant, and that to De Quincey who first saw him at Allan Bank in the Autumn of 1808, he should have seemed "framed with an express view to gymnastic exercises of every sort." De Quincey's impressions are well worth repeating :

"Here, therefore, it was that, opening the door hastily in quest of a book, I found seated, and in earnest conversation, two gentlemen—one of them my host, Mr. Wordsworth, at that time about thirty-seven or thirty-eight years old. The other was a younger man by good sixteen or seventeen years, in a sailor's dress, manifestly in robust health, *fervidus juventâ*, and wearing upon his countenance a powerful expression of ardour and animated intelligence, mixed with much good nature. *Mr. Wilson of Elleray*, delivered, as the formula of introduction, in the deep tones of Mr. Wordsworth, at once banished the momentary surprise I felt on finding an unknown stranger where I had expected nobody, and substituted a surprise of another kind. I now well understood who it was that I saw ; and there was no wonder at his being at Allan Bank, Elleray standing within nine miles ; but, as usually happens in such cases, I felt a shock of surprise on seeing a person so little corresponding to the one I had half unconsciously prefigured. . . . Figure to yourself, then, a tall man, about six feet high, within half an inch or so, built with tolerable appearance of strength, but at the date of my description (that is, in the very spring-tide and blossom of youth), wearing, for the predominant character of his person, lightness, and agility, or (in our Westmoreland phrase)

lishness. He seemed framed with an express view to gymnastic exercises of every sort. . . .

“Viewed, therefore, by an eye learned in gymnastic proportions, Mr. Wilson presented a somewhat striking figure; and by some people he was pronounced with emphasis a fine-looking young man; but others, who less understood, or less valued these advantages, spoke of him as nothing extraordinary. Still greater division of voices I have heard on his pretensions to be thought handsome. In my opinion, and most certainly in his own, these pretensions were but slender. His complexion was too florid; hair of a hue quite unsuited to that complexion; eyes not good, having no apparent depth, but seeming mere surfaces; and, in fine, no one feature that could be called fine, except the lower region of his face, mouth, chin, and the parts adjacent, which were then (and perhaps are now) truly elegant and Ciceronian. Ask in one of your public libraries for that little quarto edition of *Rhetorical Works of Cicero*, edited by Schütz (the same who edited *Æschylus*), and you will there see—as a frontispiece to the first volume—a reduced whole length of Cicero from the antique; which, in the mouth and chin, and indeed generally, if I do not greatly forget, will give you a lively representation of the contour expression of Professor Wilson’s face. Taken as a whole, though not handsome (as I have already said), when viewed in a quiescent state, the head and countenance are massy, dignified, and expressive of tranquil sagacity. . . . Note, however, that of all this array of personal features, as I have here described

them, I then saw nothing at all, my attention being altogether occupied with Mr. Wilson's conversation and demeanour, which were in the highest degree agreeable; the points which chiefly struck me being the humility and gravity with which he spoke of himself, his large expansion of heart, and a certain air of noble frankness which overspread everything he said. He seemed to have an intense enjoyment of life; indeed, being young, rich, healthy, and full of intellectual activity, it could not be very wonderful that he should feel happy and pleased with himself and others; but it was somewhat unusual to find that so rare an assemblage of endowments had communicated no tinge of arrogance to his manner, or at all disturbed the general temperance of his mind."¹

As one passes through the gate, one sees Coleridge staggering up the drive, weighted with German books, which he has borrowed from De Quincey at Town End, or De Quincey himself going to ask after "baby William," with a present in his hand for "his beloved little Kate," and her brother Thomas; or returning with Hartley Coleridge spouting Greek at his side, and with his hands full of a batch of proof for his evening's delectation; for Coleridge is revising the first number of *The Friend*, and Brown, the Penrith printer, has been almost as dilatory as Coleridge is unbusinesslike and unpunctual.²

Nor are Wordsworth, Wilson, De Quincey, and Cole-

¹ *De Quincey's Works*, ed. by Masson—"Professor Wilson"—Vol. V., pp. 262, 263, 266, 268.

² As a matter of fact the first copy of *The Friend* did not appear till the first of June, 1809. The twenty-seventh number, and last, was published on March 15, 1810.

ridge, the only memories that cling about the pleasant park-like ground of Allan Bank. For to Allan Bank in the summers of 1832, 1833 came Dr. Arnold, with his wife and family, for holiday rest. Matthew Arnold's reverence for the Laureate may have had its beginning in his early association with the very house in which Wordsworth had lived and written.

On now we go towards the church, but, at the foot of the hill, our eyes catch sight of the old ivy-covered post office where Matthew Arnold and Arthur Clough in undergraduate days, spent many a happy hour together. We enter the old sanctuary of St. Oswald and see the roof upheld "by naked rafters intricately crossed," as described in the *Excursion*. We gaze upon the tombs of Dora, Dorothy, Mrs. Wordsworth, of William the Poet's son, and that son's wife, of Miss Hutchinson and Mrs. Clough, and of the Rydal artist William Hull; we stumble over the grass where old Simpson, the pattern parson of the *Excursion*, for fifty years priest of Wythburn, lies amongst his kin; we read the epitaph the broken-hearted Poet wrote for his two children's grave, the inscription he devised for the grave of Green the artist. We look at his own face in marble on the church wall, with Keble's touching character-sketch beneath it. We look, too, more than once, on Mrs. Fletcher's beautiful marble profile and so go out and away with the sound of Rotha in our ears, and gratitude in our heart for the manner in which Wordsworth's prayer has been answered, that care should be taken of the eight yew-trees he transplanted to the churchyard, from Loughrigg Tarn. We

feel that if at some far distant time they shall rival the majesty of the Yew of Lorton, or that once grand but now shattered assemblage in Borrowdale, they will not be the less honoured, because the Poet's heart "in gratitude for what he had received from the past, did this deed for far posterity." We cross the road from the church and enter the Rectory which sheltered Wordsworth and his five children after he migrated from Allan Bank between 1811 and 1813.

Thence we go back, irresistibly drawn towards the church. Ah! what a solemn place of memories that Grasmere churchyard is! It is too sad to linger in. But it is too sweetly solemn to leave. One leans upon the parapet of the old bridge by the Vicarage over which Wordsworth and his wife so often looked with tears in their eyes for loss of those beloved children, Catharine and Thomas, laid there beneath the ground; and one remembers how that churchyard with the dust in its keeping, that

"neither hears nor sees;
Rolled round in earth's diurnal course,
With rocks, and stones, and trees,"¹

drove the Poet and his wife away from Grasmere Vale to Rydal Mount in the Spring of 1813. In sight of those two freshly-mounded graves "they could not regain that peace of mind, they felt so needful to their high calling." But at the last they both returned in peace—beyond all breaking—and lovers of Wordsworth who hither come with gratitude and sense of endless loss, go away with a feeling that something of that peace has breathed upward

¹ *Stanzas, Written in Germany*, p. 115.

from their graves, and that the calm of the quiet churchyard corner by the river-side has possessed their souls.

Henceforth as we listen to the Rotha we hear within its tender voice a note of sorrow for another poet, who went swiftly to his resting in 1888,—a poet who knew this Grasmere Valley well,—who, with his father, Dr. Arnold, dwelt, whilst Fox How was being built, away there up at Allan Bank; who afterwards came hither with the Arthur whom he loved, for health, and happiness, and study, and the true companionship of noble minds, by which men grow to help their day. Matthew Arnold lies beside the Thames, among the willows and poplars of Laleham. The prayer he prayed, when he wrote his Memorial verses on Wordsworth, with Grasmere Churchyard and April, 1850, in mind,

“Keep fresh the grass upon his grave
O Rotha, with thy living wave!
Sing him thy best! for few or none
Hears thy voice right, now he is gone,”¹

may be prayed by us, too, as we think of Matthew Arnold, if we will but substitute the word “Isis” for the word “Rotha.”

But Grasmere Churchyard is haunted by other ghosts to-day. For in Grasmere Churchyard, hard by the Poet’s Corner, upon a tombstone are the lines:—

“Now dearest, that thy brows are cold,
We see thee as thou art, and know
Thy likeness to the wise below,
Thy kindred to the great of old.”

That is a memorial of the Arthur beloved by Arnold, of

¹ *Arnold’s Poetical Works, Memorial Verses*, 1850.

Arthur Clough, who knew the Rotha and bathed in all its pools. Here is an abstract from a letter Clough wrote from Patterdale, in July, 1844. "I came to Foxhow about three weeks ago, to meet Matt. . . . Breakfast 8; work 9-30 to 1-30; bathe, dinner 1-30 to 3; work 3 to 6; walk *ad infinitum*; tea, ditto.

"M. has gone out fishing, when he ought properly to be working: . . . it has however come on to rain furiously; so Walrond, who is working sedulously at Herodotus, and I rejoice to think that he will get a good wetting."¹ Such is the young undergraduate's record of his time of work, and mountain-walk, at Fox How! Alas! in 1861 he died, aged forty-three. He was laid to rest at Florence; his heart was enshrined in the heart of his friends; his memory was intrusted to the tombstone, here in the Grasmere Churchyard, which tells us also that his mother and his sister Anne, of educational fame, have passed beyond the bourne.

But whose are the lines that are graven on the stone that keeps Clough's memory? They are the lines of the lover of that Arthur of whom he sang in *In Memoriam*—of Tennyson who honoured this second Arthur also. And when the Laureate, in 1861, revisited the Pyrenees to seek the spots where he had wandered with Arthur Hallam thirty years before, he had Arthur Clough with him for company. Much converse had they, these two poets. They parted, and in less than a month from their parting, Clough joined that other Arthur, gone before

¹ *Poems and Prose Remains of A. H. Clough*, ed. by his Wife, Vol. I., pp. 93, 94.

into the silent land. Thus it has come to pass that we cannot stand by Clough's tombstone without a memory of that great poet friend, who fell on sleep among the Aldworth groves on October 6, 1892, Alfred, Lord Tennyson.

But, as in Grasmere Churchyard, we think of him who, entering rest, was still in thought companioned by his mighty friend, the master of all English song—for we remember how *Cymbeline* was the last book Tennyson asked for—we must needs think of another, a minor local poet, of Edward Quillinan—who also, as he lay a-dying at Loughrigg Holme on July 8, 1851, could, in his delirium, talk only of Milton, of Shakespeare, and of Wordsworth. He had written of Wordsworth, and of Dora's death, in 1851, thus:

“Of him the tarns and meres are eloquent,
The running waters are his chroniclers,
The eternal mountains are his monument,
A few frail hearts and one green mound are hers.”

That green mound lay but a few feet from the grave of his first wife, who perished by fire—“Fate's blameless victim in her bloom of youth”—at Ivy Cottage, Rydal, in 1822.

The Poet's request, which is extant in sonnet form—

“Between those graves a space remains for me,
Oh lay me there wherever I may be
When met by Death's pale angel”—

was granted. The lonely man, twice widower, who could not walk by “the river on Helvellyn born” without hearing voices calling from this churchyard to him, rose gladly at the call of death, and joined his loved ones laid by Rotha's stream. The Grasmere churchyard is



INTERIOR OF DOVE COTTAGE.

filled with noble dust and noble melody; "its grassy heaps lie amicably close"; its tombstones are many in number now, notwithstanding the fact that tombstones are comparatively a modern innovation in the vale. Old Jonathan Otley, who was born in the year 1766, remembered the time when, as a boy, he played upon the first tombstone that was ever placed in Grasmere churchyard; and observed that he believed all the remote mountain churchyards were then, as Wordsworth describes that of Ennerdale:

" ' In our churchyard
Is neither epitaph nor monument,
Tombstone nor name—only the turf we tread,
And a few natural graves.' " ¹

And still the old feeling against tombstones (as I have found in Crosthwaite, so lately as the year 1893) survives among some of the more old-fashioned folk of the dales. Yet, is it not something to be thankful for, that above the earth that hides their hearts of dust, these poets should leave records in undecaying stone, of the sorrow that sometimes filled them, while they were yet on earth? Who does not go away the richer for the reading of that verse above the place where little Thomas Wordsworth lies entombed? Who is not subdued into thoughtful pity by the legend, "By Thy Cross and Passion," that tells us of the struggle that poor Hartley Coleridge made, as he went from darkness into light? Yes, long as men with poetic susceptibilities to all evil, as well as all good, press on their way of tears to Him who

¹ *The Brothers*, p. 125.

wore the crown of thorns, that tombstone with its double garland of oak-leaf and of thorn, and its touching inscription, may do for their souls as much as all the verse he wrote, whose sonnet *On Prayer* is one of the sweetest in our language,—Hartley, the laureate for innocent childhood hereabout, who found “pain was his guest” long before he entered the painlessness of Grasmere churchyard mould.

A painter lies within a few feet of the poet. William Green, a true observer of nature who, for twenty years or more, laboured in love to give faithful delineations of hill and dale, and won the respect and affection of the whole countryside, is buried just beyond the shadow of the yew. Read his epitaph; it was written by Wordsworth for his dead friend. The epitaph upon the tombstone testifies not merely to the universal regret for this good man, who died April 29, 1823, but strikes a very tender note which Wordsworth knew would ring on for many a year. Green not only gave faithful reproductions of the countryside, but he also placed on record, by means of his pencil, “lasting memorials of its more perishable features.” Thanks to him we know now what beautiful old cottage houses with ample stone-seated porches, and snug farms with outside galleries “’neath overhanging eaves,” once made each nook of Lakeland the glory of the artist, and the natural expression of the taste of the refined dalesman of old times.¹

¹ The inscription on the cross above the grave of William Hull is more than suggestive of the spirit of the place: “Thou, Lord, hast made me glad through Thy works.”

Yet would one have one other tombstone added, if only to keep alive the memory of that kindred spirit to the bard, which was ever found in his younger brother, the sailor, John. He perished in the East Indiaman, the "Earl of Abergavenny," which, on its outward voyage was wrecked on the Shambles off the Portland Bill through the incompetency of the pilot, on Friday night, February 5, 1805. He never wrote a line of poetry, but meek, affectionate, silently enthusiastic, loving all quiet things, he was, so his brother William once said, a poet in everything but words :

"From the solitude
Of the vast sea didst bring a watchful heart
Still couchant, an inevitable ear,
And an eye practised like a blind man's touch." ¹

"In everything his judgments were sound and original, . . . his eye for the beauties of nature was as fine and delicate as ever poet or painter was gifted with." ² It is true that he has his monument; for of him Wordsworth sang in *The Brothers*, *The Character of the Happy Warrior*, *Peele Castle in a Storm*, *The Daisy*, *Elegiac Stanzas*, and in *The Rock of Names*.

"Six weeks beneath the moving sea
He lay in slumber quietly;" ³

before he was carried to his grave in Wyke Regis.

But would it not be fitting in this Vale of Poets, that

¹ *When to the Attractions of the Busy World*, p. 220.

² Knight's *Life of Wordsworth*, Vol. I., p. 374.

³ *To the Daisy*, p. 216.

he, who during life was in thought never divided from his poet-brother, should in death be in our thoughts undivided still? One could well wish for a plain headstone of the Wordsworth type, as near his brother's grave as might be, with some terse inscription that should call to mind the man who in 1800 paced the Fir-Grove near the Wishing-Gate till he wore a track; who heard the sound of wind among the shrouds as he listened to the southing of the larches and felt himself a keeper of his watch on quarter-deck; who fondly hoped that one last voyage would bring him home to thought and quietude and communing with nature in Grasmere Vale, and knew not that the angel of death kept watch with him, and that his haven was the Haven of the Good—his harbour, Paradise. Upon that tombstone might be written of him in his brother's words: "In prudence, in meekness, in self-denial, in fortitude, in just desires and elegant and refined enjoyments, with an entire simplicity of manners, life, and habit, he was all that could be wished for in man."¹

One enters again the quaint old church, which, though it show to-day the later ornaments of modern Anglican worship, still preserves a severe simplicity, and gives one the idea of having been set in a vale where storms might blow and foemen hammer at the gate. It is as if its massy tower had never quite forgotten, from St. Oswald's days downward, that it was the first fortress over the Cumberland Border, and a fair fit place to flee unto for refuge.

¹ Knight's *Life of Wordsworth*, Vol. I., 375.

“ Not raised in nice proportions was the pile,
But large and massy ; for duration built ;
With pillars crowded, and the roof upheld
By naked rafters, intricately crossed,
Like leafless underboughs, in some thick wood,
All withered by the depth of shade above.
Admonitory texts inscribed the walls,
Each, in its ornamental scroll, enclosed ;
Each also crowned with wingèd heads—a pair
Of rudely-painted Cherubim.”¹

One never leaves the low church door without thinking of how Wordsworth must needs have bowed his head here ; and he would be seen lost in reverie, passing homeward with his prayer-book under his arm. “ A varra religious man was Wadsworth ye kna,” a dalesman once said to me, “ he mostly what went upo’ Sundays to church wid a girt big prayer beuk under his arm an’ awt servants along of him, varra quiet and ’tentive, an’ aw, he wur in church—I’ve seed his jaws gâân when he was saying ‘ I believe ’ manny a time.” So seen, in his Sunday habits of devout reverence and regard of a common worship, the Poet’s manner sank into the minds of the villagers. Nor can one forget the fact that Keble the reverent and devout, to whom the Poet’s faith, reverence, and devotion, simplicity, and spiritual life so appealed, was the author of the epitaph beneath the Poet’s medallion. It does not often happen that a dead man has for epitaph just the words his heart would most desire. But here is a case in point. For Keble, when he vacated the Chair of Poetry at Oxford, dedicated

¹ *The Excursion*, Bk. V., p. 471.

his lectures to Wordsworth with the beautiful Latin inscription of which the words above the medallion are a faithful rendering. Wordsworth said that nothing ever written about himself and his work had so pleased him. This was remembered after the Poet's death, and Keble was invited to translate his dedicatory words as the inscription for Woolner's medallion.

Just opposite is Chantrey's simple memorial slab to the memory of Edward Quillinan's first wife, that "good Jemima," so unfortunately named for all poetical purposes, "who died by flames blown on her from her own fire-side." The last quatrain of the epitaph is terse, and one fancies that the sonnet bears impress of Hartley Coleridge's handiwork.

"The tender virtues of her blameless life,
Bright in the daughter, brighter in the wife,
And in the cheerful mother brightest shone;
That light hath passed away,
The will of God be done."

Up now to Red Bank we go, for we would visit Hawkshead and Coniston, and as we pass the house called Silver How we may remember that this was a constant house of call for the Poet and his sister, in the days when Mr. Barber dwelt there. Wordsworth and Dorothy, as before said, constantly made the round of the lake by Red Bank, and so home, either by the Loughrigg Terrace or round by Diana's Mirror and Clappersgate, and here, at Mr. Barber's house, they rested for their evening meal, for if Wordsworth was fond of a cup of tea and a "butter-shag," as we call

it in these parts, Dorothy, as I have heard tell on credible authority, was "that fond of a bit o' haverbread and butter to't as a'moast to steal it," and at this house she had the run of the pantry. We go along by Diana's Mirror or Loughrigg Tarn, with some regret that Sir George Beaumont did not "set an example here of how to build in a secluded part of the country a house that should not injure the native character of the scenery." We can see in fancy the gaunt-looking Poet walking, as he walked here at the edge of the Tarn in July, 1844, with Sir William Hamilton, Charles Hare, Arthur Butler, and Percival Graves; the Poet wondering at the darkness of the shadows cast by the mountain daisy upon one of the smooth pebbles at his feet, and wishing that these little flowers were "born to live, conscious of half the pleasure which they give." Those flowers of Loughrigg Tarn gave pleasure to other minds than Wordsworth's, for there above the road on our left-hand side stands a white-washed cottage originally called Nook House, rejoicing to-day, in the not euphonious name of "Scroggs." At Scroggs was born one of nature's gentlemen, who became afterwards, as we know, a clock-maker at Keswick, but ever learned to tell the time of day by sun and cloud and closing flower—Jonathan Otley, geologist and botanist, rural philosopher in one, last of the well-worshippers in our Lakeland. Hence we descend towards Skelwith; memories of Mrs. Gaskell, who often stayed at Mill Brow Farm, are fragrant here.

Now we have crossed Skelwith Bridge, and ascend to Hackett, near Lingmoor; here Wordsworth spent some

of his time during "spring-cleanings," as they are called, and the enforced retirement necessary for the convalescence of his children after whooping-cough; here he gathered probably much of the "Blea Tarn" local colour found in the poem of *The Solitary*. We climb over Iron Keld, that is the hill of the cold spring which the eagles haunt, as Wordsworth once climbed on that delightful morning after the farmhouse "merry neet," when, as he tells us—

"Magnificent

The morning rose, in memorable pomp,
Glorious as e'er I had beheld—in front,
The sea lay laughing at a distance; near,
The solid mountains shone, bright as the clouds,
Grain-tinctured, drenched in empyrean light;
And in the meadows and the lower grounds
Was all the sweetness of a common dawn—
Dews, vapours, and the melody of birds,
And labourers going forth to till the fields,
Ah! need I say, dear Friend! that to the brim
My heart was full; I made no vows, but vows
Were then made for me; bond unknown to me
Was given, that I should be, else sinning greatly,
A dedicated Spirit. On I walked
In thankful blessedness, which yet survives."¹

Soon Esthwaite Water, beyond its green tumbled hills and grassy moraine mounds, gleams white in mid-valley, and above the little grey Norse town of Hawkshead, the church sits—

"like a thronèd Lady, sending out
A gracious look all over her domain."²

¹ *The Prelude*, Bk. IV., p. 261.

² *Idem*, p. 257.



DAME TYSON'S COTTAGE.

Away to our left, for we are at "Outgate" now, rises what may have been the very

"crag

That, from the meeting-point of two high-ways
Ascending, overlooked them both,"¹

whither, as Wordsworth tells us in his *Prelude*, at "one Christmas time (1783), on the glad eve of its dear holidays," he went,

"Scout-like and gained the summit,"²

to look out for "the led palfreys" that should bear home his brother and himself.

There to our right lies, in the privacy of its fields removed from public road, Fieldhead; the house to which the Hardens went from Brathay Hall in 1834, and where for nine years they saw much of the congenial literary society that then made the English Lakes a pleasant place for sojourn. Faber not unfrequently came hither, and hither too his friend, young Thomas Whytehead the poet, who on one of his visits, May, 1838, left behind him in MS. a poem on the rivers Rotha and Bratha, so loved by him:

" Rivers there are that to us talk
Of many a darling tale,
There's Ouse that tells of mitred York
And Wharfe of Bolton dale.
But none may learn a song so sweet
Where'er their waters wander,
As these two brother streams that meet
In thy sweet wave Winander."

Poor young Whytehead, the promise of his life was cut

¹ *The Prelude*, Bk. XII., p. 323.

² *Idem*, p. 324.

short early. He volunteered for the mission field with Bishop Selwyn, and died on his way to New Zealand at the Waimote Bay-of-Islands in 1842.

Not far from the entrance to the town stand the ruins of Hawkshead Hall. There Edwin Sandys, the Archbishop and founder of the Grammar School in 1585, first saw the light.¹ Whether his second son, Sir Edwin Sandys, M.P., 1561 to 1629, and his seventh and youngest son, George, 1577 to 1643, here grew to manhood, one cannot say, but doubtless they stayed here and obtained from the beauty of this neighbourhood, and perhaps from the courage and strong character of the dalesmen around, something that served them, and through them their country, in good stead in after life. Of the latter—George—his works in prose and verse, though small in extent, excited the admiration of such different men as Fuller, Drayton, Isaac Walton, the Catholic Pope, the Puritan Richard Baxter, and the sceptic Gibbon. His paraphrases of the *Psalms* and the *Song of Solomon*, his poem on Christ's *Passion*, his translation of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, were held in honour in his time.

Americans who visit the valley will remember how that translation of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* came to be written. Both Edwin and George Sandys had migrated to America, and during the first terrible winter of 1608, while he and his one hundred companions were huddled behind palisades resisting the attacks of Indians and famine and fever, he interested himself in his few spare

¹ It was at Esthwaite Hall (near the Lake) that Archbishop Sandys was born.

hours in making this translation. But Americans will also remember with pride that in a way their great American Constitution was nursed in the Esthwaite Vale, for when George Sandys became Treasurer of the Virginian Colony he and Edwin devised the House of Deputies for the administration of public affairs in Virginia. This House of Deputies became the model and prototype of the American Congress.

Of Sir Edwin Sandys it should be remembered that he was imprisoned with John Selden for his bold opposing of the Court in the Parliament of 1621; that before this he had joined hands with Sir Francis Bacon—afterwards Lord Verulam—in drawing up the Remonstrance in 1604, addressed to James I. in words which, says John Richard Green, sound like a prelude to the petition of Right. "Your Majesty would be misinformed," said the Remonstrance, "if any man should deliver that the Kings of England have any absolute power in themselves, either to alter Religion, or to make any laws concerning the same, otherwise than as in temporal causes, by consent of Parliament." I do not know what Sir Edwin wrote besides *Europae Speculum* and *Sacred Hymns*, but it is clear that the literary love that in Sir Edwin's father gave us Hawkshead Grammar School, was certainly bequeathed to two of his sons. We enter Hawkshead, the quaint little Viking town that knows not any change, with its cottage stairways and overhanging eaves, its village fountain, its streamlet from the hills that, "boxed and channelled" as described in *The Prelude*, has "lost its voice."

But it is of Wordsworth that we think as we gain the churchyard. To the school hard by, for "the grassy churchyard hangs upon a slope, above the village school," came, in 1778, William, the orphan boy, and his elder brother Richard; William, with a heart so tender to receive impressions from his surroundings, that, years after, he could write:

"Well do I call to mind the very week
When I was first entrusted to the care
Of that sweet Valley."¹

Here, under four teachers, the Rev. James Peake, Rev. E. Christian, Rev. W. Taylor, and Rev. Thomas Bowman, "Fair seed-time had his soul"; and here, till 1787 brought the hour for departure to Cambridge University, the Poet's soul grew in the quiet garden of nature, and felt, that the ministration of the lowly cottages around, was a thing unforgettable,

"being as you were
So beautiful among the pleasant fields
In which ye stood."²

Let us visit the tiny cottage of the good dame, Ann Tyson, who was a sort of foster mother of the schoolboy Poet, to his endless gratitude and gain in knowledge of the "huts where poor men lie." Let us look from the little window through which the boy looked when he

"Had lain awake on summer nights to watch
The moon in splendour couched among the leaves
Of a tall ash that near our cottage stood."³

¹ *The Prelude*, Bk. V., p. 268.

² *Idem*, Bk. I., p. 241.

³ *Idem*, Bk. IV., p. 258.

Let us gaze on the woods and rills that were Wordsworth's daily teachers. If we will, we can enter the schoolhouse where his name, deep incised upon the desk, preserves a silent record of his schoolboy days. We can visit the churchyard where his beloved school-fellow, that boy whom the cliffs and islands of Winander knew so well, and the frugal dame "honoured with little less than filial love," lie buried. We can, if but the privilege of a boat on Esthwaite is allowed us, see the same peak of Wetherlam loom through the dark, and pulse in shadow, and follow in mystic hugeness and moving life, about our keel, suggesting to us as it suggested to Wordsworth "Unknown modes of being": can wander, as he wandered, at the dawn with his schoolboy friend, young Raincock of Rayrigg, round the margin of the lake, and murmur out "well-ordered lines of verse," till "sound of exultation echoed thro' the groves." To realise all that Hawkshead did to make the boy-poet, we must read *The Prelude*. We shall never know how much Esthwaite Valley gave to the boy's mind, till we know by heart this poem, with its clear record of his early years, and the secrets of the building of his mind.

But there is another lake beyond this to the west; Thurstonwater, the lake of the town of Thor, the "King's town," or Coniston of to-day. Let us call to mind the touching poem which begins:

"Dear native regions, I foretell,
From what I feel at this farewell,
That, wheresoe'r my steps may tend,
And whenso'er my course shall end,

If in that hour a single tie
Survive of local sympathy,
My soul will cast the backward view,
The longing look alone on you.”¹

That poem was written when Wordsworth was about to leave school at Hawkshead. “The child is father to the man,” and Wordsworth, as a man, recast those lines in *The Prelude* under the title *Retrospect*:

“Dear native Regions, wheresoe’er shall close
My mortal course, there will I think on you ;
Dying, will cast on you a backward look ;
Even as this setting sun (albeit the Vale
Is no where touched by one memorial gleam),
Doth with the fond remains of his last power
Still linger, and a farewell lustre sheds,
On the dear mountain-tops where first he rose.”²

Let us go over the hill to Coniston, not by the hard high road, but up the sloping meadows and over the moorland towards the west, and hear among the solitary hills, as Wordsworth heard,

“Low breathings coming after me, and sounds
Of undistinguishable motion steps
Almost as silent as the turf they tread.”³

Here he used as a schoolboy

“To range the open heights where woodcocks run
Along the smooth green turf. Through half the night
Scudding away from snare to snare, I plied
That anxious visitation.”⁴

The days of setting springes for woodcock seem to have passed away, but still the wanderer on our fells may find,

¹ *Composed in Anticipation of Leaving School*, p. 2.

² *The Prelude*, Bk. VIII., p. 296. ³ *Idem*, Bk. I., p. 239. ⁴ *Idem*.

in smooth grassy places, little miniature circles, or enclosures of stone, that look as if children had been playing at making houses. A nearer inspection will show that there are in the miniature city, walls, or house places, or enclosures, and many gates, the stones being set a few inches apart. There, in these openings, when Wordsworth was a lad did schoolboys and shepherds alike set springes, and any woodcock foolish enough to walk into those enclosures and pass out by the tiny gateways found his head in a horse-hair noose, from which only death could free him.

Let us pause at that magnificent view of Coniston, Old Man, and Wetherlam, as seen from the cross roads by the dark pine wood on the top of Hawkshead Hill, and remember that it was here that

“From Nature and her overflowing soul,
He had received so much, that all his thoughts
Were steeped in feeling.”¹

Let us descend to the Lake and gaze across its waters to the promontory, no longer wooded, where first he felt the immortality of joyful retrospect in these surroundings. But other minds and other eyes have felt, less or more, what Wordsworth felt by Thurstonswater. Here, for example, at Sir H. Cowper's Hawkshead there gazed upon a scene of unspeakable beauty the accomplished scholar, Miss Elizabeth Smith. I say accomplished—for she taught herself Algebra, Latin, Greek, Hebrew, Syriac, Arabic, Persian, French, Italian, Spanish, German. Fond of music, she was a good pianist. A student of the

¹ *The Prelude*, Bk. II., p. 248.

Bible, she gave a new translation of the Book of Job. She wrote the *Memoirs of Klopstock* and a selection of her papers was published after her death under the title *Fragments in Prose and Verse*.

The Smiths appear to have come into the country after some bank failure at Chepstow. Abraham Shackleton,¹ writing to Thomas Wilkinson at Yanwath in 1800, says, "Capt. Smith requests me to ask thee if there is any place to let or sell, the situation of which is beautiful and picturesque, near some of the lesser lakes, somewhere in that enchanted ground which I traversed with thee in 1786. Now, don't be alarmed, or suppose that I am about to introduce a bit of state or grandeur to mar your village tranquillity; believe me, they will harmonise perfectly with Clarkson and with thee."² Wilkinson was not scared, and procured a property for them in Patterdale and delighted in their sympathetic society. But Patterdale air did not agree with the family, and they removed to Townson Ground, now Tent Cottage, at Coniston. Wilkinson went over to advise in laying out the garden ground, and writing of an excursion he took with the Smiths to the Langdale Pikes describes the daughters thus:

"Bess, we thought, partook of her worthy father's reserve, . . . Kitty resembled her mother in lively frankness. They all sketched from nature with great taste. Bess had learned twelve languages with little

¹ It was at the school of this Abraham Shackleton at Ballitore in Ireland that Burke was educated.

² *Thomas Wilkinson*, by Mary Carr, p. 19.



WORDSWORTH'S DESK IN HAWKSHEAD SCHOOL.

assistance, and thirsted after universal knowledge. The mother of these lovely girls was their friend and companion. She was an uncommonly gifted woman, and had experienced divine support when so many temporal comforts had been taken away.”¹ Poor woman! she needed such experience, for her gifted daughter, after nearly five years of literary work and labour at Coniston, took a chill in 1805, and died at the age of thirty, on 7th of August, 1806. The account she gave of the catching of the fatal cold to her old nurse is a pathetic warning to those of us who are tempted to sit out in Lakeland after sundown.

“One very hot evening in July I took a book and walked about two miles from home, where I seated myself on a stone beside the lake. Being much engaged by a poem I was reading, I did not perceive that the sun was gone down, and was succeeded by a heavy dew, till, in a moment, I felt struck on the chest as with a sharp knife. I returned home, but said nothing of the pain. The next day being also very hot, and everyone living in the hayfield, I thought I would take a rake and work very hard to produce perspiration, in the hope that it might remove the pain, but it did not.” Poor girl! that pain death only could remove. Consumption set in, and when the next July came she was close to the gates of the land that is very far off, and longed to be at rest. But the King in his beauty was so visible to her, on shining lake, on misty fell, on Coniston, rose-red with dawn, or purple with the

¹ *Thomas Wilkinson*, by Mary Carr, p. 20.

eve's o'ershadowing, that she sat in her garden-tent through the long summer days, and never failed to speak of the wonders that were revealed to her from her vantage ground. Indeed the present Tent Lodge owes both its building and its name, to the fact that the dying eyes had pointed out the spot where it now stands, as "a good situation for a new cottage."

Wilkinson, her Quaker friend, was inconsolable for her loss, and wrote a most touching letter to her mother at Bessy's death, and enclosed a memorial poem.

"She who so late, by kindred taste allied,
Paced this lone path, conversing at my side,"¹

was walking now with other friends beyond "the River," and as the poet yeoman paced his woodland walk beside his own stream, he thought of that other darkened flood, that the accomplished scholar-girl had crossed too soon, and wrote

"How dark this river murmuring on its way,
This wood how peaceful at the close of day;
What clouds come on, what shades of evening fall,
Till one vast veil of sadness covers all."²

Green the Artist, who himself died in the following year, felt Bessy's death deeply, and did what he could to comfort at least one bereaved friend, by forwarding a landscape, probably of Coniston Water, with a moon-light effect upon it. Some suggestion of the loss the family had sustained was indicated by inscribing on the frame a couplet from Wilkinson's poem.

¹ *Thomas Wilkinson*, by Mary Carr, p. 22.

² *Idem*.

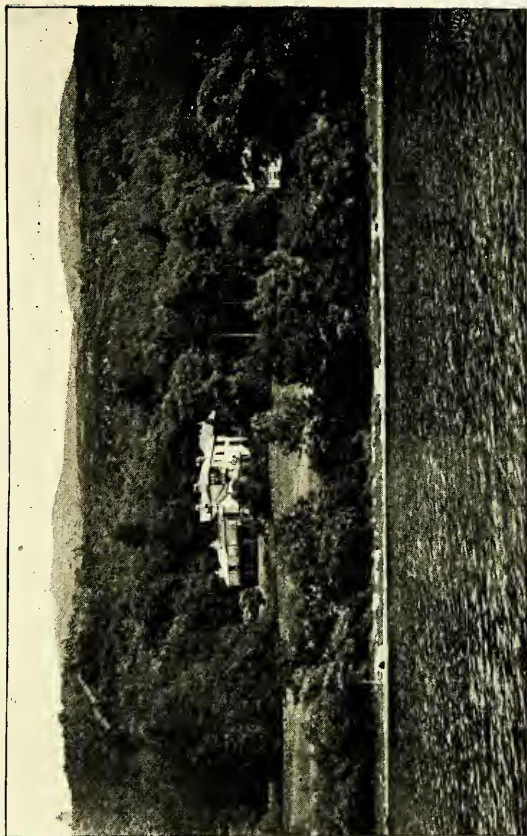
The present Tent Lodge has other memories than those of the young poetess Elizabeth Smith. I have sometimes thought that Tennyson heard here "the quarry thunder flap from right to left," as it echoes from Tilberthwait Ghyll, or from the Quarries of Coniston Old Man. Still in the meadow near by the peasants point to a place they speak of as Tennyson's Seat, and one can well believe that for so fair a view the late Lord Laureate would often have strolled thither. To the cottage opposite in 1820 came Mrs. Fletcher, and the Hardens escorted her thence, in a famous ride over Wraynose to the Duddon Valley, and over Hard Knot, to Eskdale, which was long remembered by the members of either family, and at Tent Lodge itself.

Now close beside us on our left, a gateway opens to a woodland retreat honoured throughout the world, for this is Brantwood ;—Brantwood, where Gerald Massey, the son of a canal boatman, a labourer in a silk mill, and afterwards an errand boy in London, came as a poet and thinker in later years, for quiet and meditation. *Poems and Chansons, The Ballad of Babe Christabel, with other Lyric Poems, War Waits, Craigcrook Castle*,—these are the works which make us class Gerald Massey amongst the *literati* of Lakeland. After him came hither a sonnet writer, whose verse has a Miltonic ring about it—W. J. Linton, poet, printer, wood-engraver, chartist and republican.

It was in one of the out-buildings of Brantwood, that the press was set to work, which gave to the world the short-lived yellow-coloured periodical, called

The Republic. It was at Brantwood that Linton pursued the art of wood-engraving in which he has rarely if ever been excelled.

No account of the literary associations of our English Lakes could be justified for its completeness, were we to forget that there at Brantwood rested from his labours for England and the world a true poet of the English Lakes, one who had gathered up and given forth with passionate appeal, the best teaching of that school of lake poets and philosophers which we associate with the name of Wordsworth. Preacher, poet, painter, political economist, philosopher, patriot in one, he had drunk deep not only from wells of English undefiled, but from the well-springs of purest aspiration,—the fountain-head of God. He had told us of the blessings that lie about our feet like flowers; he had shown us of joy “in widest commonalty spread”; he had filled us with a desire for “a new heaven and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness”; he had bade us know assuredly, that “nature never did betray the heart that loved her.” As long as any grateful heart turns lovingly to our Lakeland hills they will remember, that from our mountains and our streams, our flowers and our woody places, our lakes and lawns, our clouds and sunshine, Ruskin’s heart drew courage, drew strength and power to inspire, yea, and to be patient and endure. To his sure retreat above the tranquil lake, in Coniston’s quiet vale, the greatest gladiator of his time, Carlyle hardly excepted, the most self-sacrificing teacher, the purest-minded thinker, the most far-sighted prophet of his day, worn-out and weary, returned for rest.



BRANTWOOD FROM THE LAKE.

And here too in the valley by the side of the beck that comes rippling down from Coniston Old Man, beneath the shade of the deodars, and by the side of his three friends, the 'ladies of the Thwaite,' he now lies at rest for ever. A quiet failing of power and peaceful expectation of death, a little cold, a day or two in bed, and then a painless going forth of the soul at eventide when the heavens above the Coniston hills were filled with glory. Such was the end of him who had done more than most men to show us how the Heavens are continually telling the glory of God, and how the firmament showeth His handiwork. He passed away on Saturday, January 19th, and was laid to rest with all the tender simplicity of a country-side funeral on Thursday, Jan. 25, 1900.

And of what character was the man by whose quiet grave we have been standing, there within sound of the garrulous beck, and within sight of Yeudale Crag, the Furness Fells, and the long levels of the gleaming Thurston Mere?

Let him speak for himself. The son of an "entirely honest merchant" he was ever entirely honest with himself, and this is his own deliberate opinion of what he was so far as he knew himself.

Because I have spent my life in almsgiving, not in fortune-hunting, because I have laboured always for the honour of others, not my own, and have chosen rather to make men look to Turner and Luini than to form or exhibit the skill of my own hand; because I have lowered my rents, and assured the comfortable lives of my poor tenants, instead of taking from them all I could force for the roofs they needed; because I love a wood walk better

than a London Street, and would rather watch a seagull fly than shoot it, and rather hear a thrush sing than eat it; finally, because I never disobeyed my mother, because I have honoured all women with solemn worship, and have been kind even to the unthankful and evil, therefore the hacks of English art and literature wag their heads at me, and the poor wretch who pawns the dirty linen of his soul daily for a bottle of sour wine and a cigar, talks of the effeminate sentimentality of Ruskin. (1874.)

What I am, since I took on me the function of a teacher, it is well that the reader should know, as far as I can tell him. Not an unjust person; not an unkind one; not a false one; a lover of order, labour, and peace. That, it seems to me, is enough to give me right to say all I care to say on ethical subjects; more, I could only tell definitely through details of autobiography such as none but prosperous and (in the simple sense of the word) faultless lives could justify; and mine has been neither. Yet if any one, skilled in reading the torn manuscripts of the human soul, cares for more intimate knowledge of me, he may have it by knowing with what persons in past history I have most sympathy.

I will name three. In all that is strongest and deepest in me—that fits me for my work, and gives light or shadow to my being, I have sympathy with Guido Guinicelli. In my constant natural temper, and thoughts of things and of people, with Marmontel. In my enforced and accidental temper, and thoughts of things and of people, with Dean Swift. Any one who can understand the natures of those three men, can understand mine; and having said so much,

I am content to leave both life and work to be remembered or forgotten, as their cases may deserve. (1871).

It would be possible for us now to take train from Coniston, and pass by the ancient seat of the Le Flemings, Old Coniston Hall, in which, so local legend has it, Sydney came away through the groves of Torver that to-day give shelter to one of our best Icelandic scholars in the north, who has done, and is doing in his quiet way, much to make real to us our Viking ancestry of language and local place names, and who, as he shepherds his human flock, is not unmindful of those old British shepherd days that have left their "numerals" to the fell-side farmer of our time.¹

We soon reach Broughton-in-Furness, interesting to lovers of Wordsworth since, as the Poet tells us in his introductory note to the *Duddon Sonnets*, during his college vacation and two or three years afterwards before taking his Bachelor's Degree, he was several times resident in the house of a near relative who lived in this small town, and was thence enabled to pass many delightful hours upon the banks of the Duddon, which becomes an estuary about a mile from that place.

Readers of the *Duddon Sonnets* may wander up the vale with such a paper in their hand as Mr. Rix's notes on the localities of these sonnets, published by the Wordsworth Society, or with Mrs. Lynn Linton's description of the vale, and delight themselves with dreams of the days of Wonderful Walker, botanist, schoolmaster, shepherd, haymaker, shearer, wool-comber, will-maker, refreshment-provider, and village priest in one,

¹ The Rev^d. T. Ellwood.

at the primitive Seathwaite. They will be astonished if, rubbing their eyes, they see that venerable pair, Robert Walker and Ann his wife, who, as the exponents of "Sacred religion ! mother of 'form and fear,'" laboured here for God and for the people of the dale, till at the ripe age of ninety-three, each entered into rest—the wife, as the inscription on the tombstone tells us, on January 2nd, 1801; the husband, on June 25th, 1802. For there is such an air of

" Ancient manners, sure defence,
Where they survive of wholesome laws "

about this Duddon Vale, that one could well believe the old republic of shepherds still possessed the "Vale of the Thunderer"; still elected from their own body a reader to read the service when they met at Seathwaite, and gave him, as pay, harden-sark as shirts for his back, clogs for his feet, and whittlegate, or right to knife and fork at their various houses, with power to feed a certain number of geese on the common, as his "guse-gate," and permission to claim fees for the writing of letters, the making of wills, or teaching of the children in the village school.

Those who read the parish register of Seathwaite Chapel will find therein this entry, "Buried June 28, the Rev. Robert Walker. He was curate of Seathwaite for 66 years. He was a man singular for his temperance, industry, and integrity." But they cannot learn from that short entry, what a passionate lover of nature, of insects, of fossils, of flowers, and of birds, this fell-side pastor was.



RUSKIN'S STUDY, BRANTWOOD.

He walked, as other patriarchs have walked before him, to meditate in the fields at eventide. The stars had messages for him. On the last day of his long life, the hoary old prophet of the vale tottered out on his daughter's arm, to look at the heavens and meditate in the open air. "How clear the moon shines to-night," he said. It was his last word on earth, for he went straight to his bed, and entered into a sleep from which was no awaking.

But he has his monument. In the seventh book of the *Excursion* his character is admirably sketched, and as we pass the chapel, the eighteenth sonnet in the Duddon series may remind us of the days

"When this low Pile a Gospel Teacher knew,
Whose good works formed an endless retinue;
A pastor such as Chaucer's verse portrays;
Such as the heaven-taught skill of Herbert drew;
And tender Goldsmith crowned with deathless praise!"¹

We may, in imagination, pass a fisherman in the pouring rain, carrying on his back a little lad from Hawkshead school, worn out with his day's angling excursion down the vale. That lad is the Poet, who little thought on that first day of his acquaintance with this Duddon valley, that it would be "his lot to celebrate, in a strain of love and admiration, the stream which for many years he never thought of without recollections of disappointment and distress."²

We may also remember how, down this valley, that little

¹ *Southwaite Chapel*, p. 603.

² Note prefaced to *Duddon Sonnets*, p. 598.

school lad, grown to be a man of seventy summers, made a tour in 1840 with his wife and daughter, Miss Fenwick and her niece, and Mr. and Mrs. Quillinan; and, as he tells us, lost not only his wife but his temper, and journeyed on wifeless and vexed to Broughton, there, in the happy evening, like the traveller and the streamlet parted for a time, "in love to meet again."¹

If, however, we will not ascend Duddon Vale, we can take with us Faber's poem *Sir Lancelot*, and let the weight of Blackcombe fall upon our spirits as it fell upon his; can pass its heavy seaward-gazing mass that frowns across the sands, with thought of the mystery that must once have shrouded that sacred mountain. For here, till the middle of last century were many Druid Circles; the remains of two or three still exist. To this holy mountain in olden days came the sun-worshippers, and hither, in our time, that prophet of "the new daystar from on high," the poet priest.

Faber chose well when he made the woods of "Whicham" resonant with his song. The estuary of the Duddon and the wild moorland from Blackcombe to Devoke; the woods and glades between Broughton and Eskdale, are full of suggestion for the poet. Sir Lancelot the Hermit had a fair place as garden of meditation for his repentant soul.

If we leave the train at good King Aveling's town, Ravenglass of to-day, and pass up Eskdale to Boot, and thence over the hill and moor to Wastwater, we shall find good company. All the way, far down this valley

¹ Cf. Note prefaced to *Duddon Sonnets*, p. 598.

has the voice of Christopher North rung out, and, as old Ritson of Wastdale used to say, in the days of the Professor's tenting-out expedition, "It was aw life and murth amang us as lang as Professor Wilson was at Wastdale Head."

But we are wandering too far afield. We had best come back to the centre of Lakeland literary life, and revisiting Grasmere once more, pass thence over the Raise, back to Southey-land and the Keswick Vale.

CHAPTER VII

GRASMERE : TONGUE GHYLL : GRISEDALE TARN : HELVELLYN :
WYTHBURN

WORDSWORTH, SCOTT, AND DAVY ON HELVELLYN : DEATH OF
CHARLES GOUGH : COLERIDGE'S DESCRIPTION OF HEL-
VELLYN : PARSON SIMPSON : GRAY AT
GRASMERE

"To be at Grasmere," writes Miss Wordsworth, "is like being at a natural church. To spend one's holiday there is like having a week of Sundays." Yes, true it is, that in the Grasmere Vale, except for about six weeks in the year, one may still echo the young poet's words :

"Afar though nation be on nation hurled
And life with toil and ancient pain depressed,
Here one may scarce believe the whole wide world
Is not at peace ; and all men's hearts at rest."

But we go from the churchyard and the valley of peace, toward the terrible gate of war in the hills, where Saxon Edmund in the year 945 clashed with the Cymric King

Dunmail, and made the red stream "Roth," "Rothea," or "Rotha," ruddier still. It is not without a sense of fitness that, as one turns into the main road which slopes up to the Raise, we find ourselves face to face with what once by its sign was known to be the "Famous Swan" sung of in Wordsworth's *Waggoner*. For this inn is made interesting by its entertainment of that man who sung of tribal feud and battle of the olden time, the Wizard of the North. What a bit of ignorance or thoughtlessness it is, that such old historic sounds as once graced with their quaintness or their significance our wayside hostels, should have been allowed to disappear. Where is the "Real Old Cock" of Troutbeck? Where the simple invitation to "drink good ale" of John Standley at Thirlspot? And where the "White Swan" that looked down in such dumb kindliness and pride upon Sir Walter Scott, who, when he stayed with the simple water-drinking bard at Dove Cottage, came hither for his morning glass of "Scottish dew"?

Let us in thought join a celebrated party on a certain day in the late autumn of 1805, here at the "White Swan" door. The grey ponies are saddled; Wordsworth and Dorothy, and Humphrey Davy, with Scott and his wife perhaps, who have come round from Patterdale, are going off for a far mountain ramble. Out bustles the busy landlord: "Why sir," he innocently jerks out to Scott, "Ye've coomed seùn for ya glass to-daäy." There is a laugh all round, the landlord has told tales out of school, and Wordsworth learns then first, how his guest has preferred the Highland dew to the "Bandusian fount

of clearness crystalline" that flows in "that orchard garden eminently fair" at Town End.

Or let us in imagination go up on a clear sunny day of the same autumn, 1805, to meet three poets on Helvellyn's top. Davy and Wordsworth have gone round to Patterdale to meet Scott, who is visiting the English Lakes for the second time. Mrs. Scott is coming round by Kirkstone to Dove Cottage in the return "tub," as carriages were then called hereabout. The gentlemen will walk over by the Grisedale Pass. The Patterdale party is full of animal spirits and of grace. Scott says he intends to live till he is eighty, and write every day. Davy in his quiet way throws himself into the talk, though it is a little less philosophic and fuller of mere anecdote than suits him. Scott is charmed with him, and in a letter written after, said he had been "delighted with the simple and unaffected style of Humphrey's bearing,—the most agreeable characteristic of high genius." Wordsworth is sad, for he is going up towards Grisedale Tarn, the place ever sacred in his mind as the place wherefrom, on Michaelmas Day of 1800, he took his last fond adieu of his sailor-brother John, and where now he must look in vain, save in the secret chambers of his heart,

"For that last thought of parting Friends
That is not to be found."¹

The party have also called in some Patterdale guides, George Harrison and old Walton, for they are bent on viewing the very spot where the young ex-Quaker Charles

¹ *Elegiac Verses*, p. 218.

Gough perished, and the scene of the wondrous three months' vigil of his faithful little Irish terrier Foxey.

Let us go up by Thring's favourite Tongue Ghyll, with no expectation, alas! of finding the waterfall as he knew it, for the Manchester aqueduct crosses the ghyll just at this point. Thence, reaching the great moraine in middle valley, that looks as if some giants of the early world were here entombed, let us gaze back at Helm Crag, and think how it struck various minds. Gray, the poet, when he passed down along the main road from Dunmail Raise to Grasmere, likened it to a gigantic building demolished. West, the writer of the *Antiquities of Furness*, thought it most like "a mass of antediluvian ruins"; Wordsworth spoke of it as

"The Astrologer, sage Sidrophel,
Where at his desk and book he sits,"

and

"the Ancient Woman
Cowering beside her rifted cell,
As if intent on magic spell."¹

Now Grisedale Tarn is reached, and Faber the poet, in spirit joins us. For his hermit soul has been longing to leave the rush and roar of the big world, and here in peace to have his habitation.

"In yon pale hollow would I dwell,
Where waveless Grisedale meekly lies,
And the three clefts of grassy fell
Let in the blueness of the skies;
And lowland sounds come trembling up
To echo in that mountain cup."²

¹ *The Waggoner*, p. 227.

² Faber's Poems, *Grisedale Tarn*, p. 250.

One could never dream, as he joins us with Whytehead the poet, or the gay-hearted young Harrison, whom he is tutoring at Green Bank, or perhaps with Charles Lloyd's son, "Lile Owey" as they called him, for companions, that this happy, active man had any design of living apart from the busy world, and becoming a monk; but his eyes are seen to gaze from time to time into some other world, and though they swiftly return to take in all the beauty of the place, and with inimitable power of observation, to delight in the least tiny plumelet of moss, the first faint shadow falling from the cloud, or dapple of raven wing and wheeling buzzard's flight upon the shining slope of Dolly Waggon and Catchedecam, you may recognise in Faber's face and look the man of meditation; and when you hear his clear bell-like beautiful voice resonantly recite the first line of the verse

"In yon pale hollow would I dwell,"

you know him for a poet with a hermit's mind.

We leave the ghosts of Faber and Edward Thring at Grisedale Tarn; and are soon beside a rock upon which—on a rough incised tablet of native volcanic ash—are inscribed the words which came to Wordsworth's lips, as he thought of the last parting with his brother John, as some say on Michaelmas Day of 1800, as some think in the December of 1804 or January of 1805:

"Here did we stop; and here looked round
While each into himself descends,
For that last thought of parting Friends
That is not to be found."¹

¹ *Elegiac Verses*, p. 218.

The prayer of the Poet, who wrote, as he stood in anguish
at this fair spot in the gateway of the hills,

“Brother and friend, if verse of mine
Have power to make thy virtues known,
Here let a monumental Stone
Stand—sacred as a Shrine,”¹

has been answered; and still so steadfast of purpose are
the hills these poets loved, that the wild flower which their
eyes beheld,

“With multitude of purple eyes,
Spangling a cushion green like moss,”²

grows yet beside the parting place of the two brothers.

We gain Helvellyn's top by way of the “Peak of the
Slave” and the “Comb of the Wild Cat's Ladder,” and
see beneath us three figures whom we take for Scott,
Wordsworth, and Davy, with their ponies tethered to one
of the old stakes on the western end of Red Tarn. We
descend by the path along Swirrel Edge and soon find
Scott, seated with old Walton upon a remarkable boulder
stone, that lies alone and is distinguishable even from
the summit, close to the place where the downward foot-
track takes a zigzag eastward, toward Patterdale. It is
the best place in the whole amphitheatre of this

“huge recess
That keeps, till June, December's snow,”³

from which to have a good look at the

“lofty precipice in front,
A silent tarn below!”⁴

¹ *Elegiac Verses*, p. 218.

² *Idem*.

³ *Fidelity*, p. 214.

⁴ *Idem*.

And in a few moments we are in earnest communion with the friends, about the tragic ending of the poor fellow who stumbled in the mist and snow, and leaving his fishing-rod high up in the Tarn Crag, fell to a swift and awful death, and left his body to the melancholy cheer of the bold Red-Tarn Raven-Club whom Wilson speaks of, and his bones to the tender watching of his faithful little terrier. Wordsworth speaks pitifully of the young man, his comrade in arms, for both of them had become volunteers: pathetically recounts the story of that faithful vigil, and his own marvel at the love of the little sentinel. Perhaps he murmurs to himself to-day the lines,

“How nourished here through such long time
He knows, who gave that love sublime;
And gave that strength of feeling, great
Above all human estimate!”¹

but he does not murmur it aloud. As for Scott, he must hear all particulars of the dog, and the finding of the body; must see the exact spot; must leave the boulder stone and going round the Tarn head, towards the dark green spot, “’mid the brown mountain-heather,” beneath the “huge nameless rock” that “in front was ascending,” must mark “the sad spot where the wanderer had died.”

But as the three poets turn to ascend to the summit of Helvellyn’s top, they do not speak of all that is in their minds. If Wordsworth was already musing on his stanza, now recorded at the cairn on Helvellyn; if Scott already had in his mind the form of that verse which Wordsworth afterwards praised so highly:

¹ *Fidelity*, p. 215.

“How long did'st thou think that his silence was slumber?

When the wind waved his garment, how oft didst thou start?”¹

the poets said nothing of their intention to immortalise the dog's fidelity. It was left for Campbell and Scott to talk over the subject afterwards, as one eminently fit for a poem—and to determine in friendly rivalry to record it; and for Scott to dash off and send next day to his friend Campbell his poem *Helvellyn*, which obliged the Poet to reply:—“I confess myself vanquished. If I were to live a thousand years, I could never write anything equal to this on the same subject.”

I spoke just now of the three poets turning to ascend towards Helvellyn top. For of Humphrey Davy, Lockhart tells us “He might have been one of the greatest Poets had he chosen.” And Lockhart adds: “I have heard Mr. Wordsworth say, that it would be difficult to express the feelings with which he, who so often had climbed Helvellyn alone, found himself standing on its summit with two such men as Scott and Davy.”²

I fancy it was not so difficult to express his feelings in their climb along Striding Edge to get there—for Wordsworth hated dizzy heights, “abrupt and perilous rocks” were “places of fear” to him; and writing of Striding Edge in his *Guide to the English Lakes*, which was published in 1810, he says: “This road ought not to be taken by anyone with weak nerves, as the top in many places scarcely affords room to plant the foot, and is beset with awful precipices on either side.”

¹ Scott's Poems, *Helvellyn*.

² Lockhart's *Life of Scott*, Vol. II., p. 275.

But Scott would go up the Edge, and astonished the whole party by his cat-like agility as he climbed upward. Wordsworth, in a note to his poem, *Musings near Aquapendente*, says: "Sir Humphrey Davy was with us at the time. We had ascended from Patterdale and I could not but admire the vigour with which Scott scrambled along that horn of the mountain called 'Striding Edge.' Our progress was necessarily slow, and was beguiled by Scott telling many stories and amusing anecdotes, as was his custom. Sir H. Davy would have probably been better pleased if other topics had occasionally been interspersed, and some discussion entered upon; at all events, he did not remain with us long at the top of the mountain, but left us to find our way down its steep side together into the Vale of Grasmere, where, at my cottage, Mrs. Scott was to meet us at dinner."¹ No wonder that Wordsworth writing of that day, thirty-two years after in his *Musings near Aquapendente*, heavy with the thought of Scott's illness, should write of it as a day on

"old Helvellyn's brow
Where once together, in his day of strength,
We stood rejoicing, as if earth were free
From sorrow, like the sky above our heads."²

Here, as we stand to-day with those three poet-hearts beside us, though the sky above our heads is free from sorrow, how can we but remember that two of those friends met twenty-six years after at Abbotsford, in 1831? Both had arrived at fame and prosperity, but one infirm, the other half-blind; the one a widower, the other sisterless,

¹ *Musings near Aquapendente*, Poems, p. 747. ² *Idem*, p. 749.

—for Dorothy was by that time, as the villagers called her, “Faculty struck, poor thing”—and both full of a certain terrible foreboding and fear for the things that were coming upon the earth. For them the powers of Heaven, on that day in 1805, so pure, so strong, to give them comfort and joy, had now been shaken, and sorrow and sadness was over all.

We leave Helvellyn, but as we go, we remember how graphically Mrs. Lynn Linton once described the scene, “the temple of the sun and of the winds”; we drink of the stream beneath the summit, and pledge a cup of crystal clear to S. T. Coleridge and his little poem:

“Where is the grave of Sir Arthur o’ Kellyn?
Where may the grave of that good man be?”¹

For hither came Coleridge on a certain Sunday, August 29, 1800, on his way to the garden of Dove Cottage at Grasmere, where his dear friends, William and Dorothy, gave the belated traveller welcome with sweet converse that lasted till half-past three in the morning. The latter, as she tells us in her Journal, was “walking in the still clear moonshine in the garden,”² when the Poet made his appearance from over the top of Helvellyn. He had scrambled up, *en route* from Keswick, either by the Thirl-spot path, or straight up from under Brown-Cove crags.

“What a scene of horrible desolateness the ascent is, so scarified with peat holes on its left running down into white cliffs, Whiteside I suppose. . . . The rugged

¹ Coleridge’s Poems, *The Knight’s Tomb*.

² Knight’s *Life of Wordsworth*, Vol. I., p. 269.

stone on the top, scorious as the dross of a smelting-house. The evening now 'lating,' I had resolved to pass by it, but nature twitched me at my heart strings. I ascended it, thanks to her, thanks to her!" The Journal continues in spasms and snatches, as if Coleridge jotted down his notes as he walked, and paused, and walked forward again. "What a scene! nothing behind me! as if it would be an affront to that which fronts me! Two complete reaches of Ullswater, then a noble tongue of a hill (Glenridding Screes, where the King of Patterdale keeps 'his goats) intercepts me, and then I see it again—about one-half of the Patterdale reach with its two vales—and away up in the mountains to the right, two tarns—and close on my right, those precipices stained with green amid their nakedness and ridges, tents embracing semi-circles. I front to them—there are two, and there is a narrow ridge between them. I will go up it—descended. As I bounded down, noticed the moving stones under the soft moss pushing my feet. Ascend a hill bright yellow-green, and regain Bassenthwaite, Skiddaw, Saddleback. Am now at the top of Helvellyn, a pyramid of stones, Ullswater, Thirlmere, Bassenthwaite, Windermere, a tarn in Patterdale.

"Travelling along the ridge, I came to the other side of those precipices, and down below me on my left—no, no! no words can convey any idea of this prodigious wildness—that precipice—its ridge sharp as a jagged knife, level so long and then ascending so boldly, what a frightful bulgy precipice I stand on, and to my right hand, the crag which corresponds to the other! how it

plunges down like a waterfall, reaches a level steepness and again plunges !

“The moon above Fairfield almost at the full—now descended over a perilous peat moss, then down a hill of stones, all dark and darkling. I climbed, stone after stone, down a half crag torrent, and came out at the Raise Gap. And, O my God ! how did that opposite precipice look in the moonshine, its name Steel Crag !”¹

Was ever mind impressionable more impressed by the “savage wildness of Helvellyn’s height,” “by dark morass and moonlit mountain side” ? The very fear of the Ancient Mariner comes upon one, as one hears how the moving stones under the soft moss pushed the wanderer’s feet ; the very rocks are all alive ! So back now, with many memories of the climbers of Helvellyn, under Dolly Waggon Pike to Grisedale Tarn, and thence to the old Ambleside and Keswick road, where Tongue Ghyll beck sings down towards the Mill, we go.

The spirit of that dear old Simpson, whose character is described for us in the Fourth Book of the *Excursion*, and who lived at High Broad Rayne, joins us, as, with Jackson’s carrier-cart jingling in front of us, and the cries of *The Waggoner* in our ear, our foot

“essays

The long ascent of Dunmail-raise.”

We can if we will, in fancy see again the venerable nonagenarian among his flowers and herbs, in the patch of walled enclosure across the road, opposite his farmhouse dwelling. There in June of 1807, as he rested

¹ The original kindly lent by Mr. Ernest Coleridge.

in the sun, death fell upon him as lightly as a shadow falling from a cloud. His ministry was ended, but his memory is with us; and still the simplicity of pastoral work that was his, lives and moves, and has its being in the very dale in which he shepherded his flock. For just such another clergyman was the late vicar of Wythburn, Basil Lawson, who died in 1892, was honoured by and an honour to, the parish which he served. In the apse of Wythburn Chapel, may be seen a painted window by Henry Holiday, that will perpetuate the memory of this follower of the Good Shepherd.

But who is this little man in garb of last century,—brown cut-away coat with flapping tails and broad brass buttons, grey knee-breeches, with ample stock and full-bottomed wig, nattily almost dandily dressed, who comes toward us, golden-headed cane in hand? You would know him among a thousand, by his delicate look, his fine brow and eyes, his parrot nose, his fair complexion. Nay, you must needs recognise him as an acquaintance. We have met him before on the moor above Keswick. It is Gray the poet. He has just come over the Raise, and here he stands on this quiet Sunday morning of October 8, 1769, and slowly taking from his ample breast pocket a reflecting mirror or "Claude glass" such as artists use, he turns it towards the Grasmere Vale and therein gazes at the fair scene. We know to within a few yards where Gray stood to take a survey of the Grasmere Vale that day, for he describes the view as if the Butterlyp How and the

little island in the lake were one object, and as if the two made a promontory that pushed out into the lake. Hence it is certain that he paused to describe the scene between the little house on the left, as one comes down from the Raise, and the place where now in the bed of the river Rotha there is a water-dam.

"The bosom of the mountains," says he, "spreading here into a broad basin, discovers in the midst *Grasmere Water*; its margin is hollowed into small bays; with eminences, some of them rocks, some of soft turf, that half conceal and vary the figure of the little lake they command. From the shore, a low promontory pushes itself far into the water, and on it stands a white village with the parish church rising in the midst of it, hanging enclosures, cornfields, and meadows green as an emerald, with their trees and hedges, and cattle, fill up the whole space from the edge of the water. Just opposite to you is a large farm-house at the bottom of a steep smooth lawn embosomed in old woods, which climb half way up the mountain's side and discover above them a broken line of crags that crown the scene. Not a single red tile, no flaming gentleman's house or garden walls break in upon the repose of this little unsuspected paradise, but all is peace, rusticity, and happy poverty in its neatest and most becoming attire."¹ So wrote the traveller Gray; and Wordsworth, half a century after his friendless and somewhat melancholy pilgrimage to Keswick, could not but note, how from the Poet's journal it was

¹ *Works of Thomas Gray*, ed. by E. Gosse. *Journal in the Lakes*, Vol. I., pp. 265, 266.

clear, that the gloom of ill-health and low spirits had been irradiated by the scenes he had described with such unaffected simplicity. Thus Wordsworth, after quoting that last sentence of the description of Grasmere Vale in 1769, added, "What is here so justly said of Grasmere, applied equally to all its sister vales. It was well for the undisturbed pleasure of the Poet that he had no forebodings of the change which was so soon to take place; and it might have been hoped that these words, indicating how much of the charm of what *was* depended upon what *was not*, would of themselves have preserved the ancient franchises of this and other kindred mountain retirements from trespass, or (shall I dare to say) would have secured scenes so consecrated from profanation. But in truth no one can travel through the more frequented tracts without being offended at almost every turn, by an introduction of discordant objects, disturbing that peaceful harmony of form and colour which had been through a long lapse of ages most happily preserved."¹

Wordsworth was right; but at least an age is coming when whatever is built in the district shall, more or less, partake of the colour of the stone of the district; and though we note here and there flagrant breaches of the rules Wordsworth so well laid down for the builders of Fox How, Fidler's Farm, and other houses in the Rydal district, there is nevertheless a canon of taste growing up, thanks largely to Wordsworth's teaching, enforced by that later poet of the lakes,

¹ *Wordsworth's Description of the Scenery of the Lakes*, p. 60.

John Ruskin, which disfigures as little as it may, the countryside.

Here, as we gaze at the old farmhouse below us, known as Town Head, that met Gray's eye in 1769, we see the old familiar square chimney coign and the pillar of moveless masonry which served so well for the base of the ascending pillar of breathing household smoke, and we remember how the poet took those old Flemish chimneys for his model.

We have come "over t' Raaise Gap" now. We are in Manchester at the Lakes. That brand-new road to the left was built by the men of Manchester, as part of the price for staving off opposition at the time of going to Parliament for their bill. That brand-new bell and its brand-new belfry of the little Wythburn Church is a bit of Manchester work also. For how many years the little bell had hung in its simple cobble-stone rough-cast belfry at Wythburn Chapel one cannot say. Probably as many years as the river Bure had sung, and glanced, and glistened, beneath that beautiful three-arched little bridge at Legberthwaite, that was lately destroyed to make way for the rush of water from the tunnel in the dam. And in how many pictures of artists, great and little in repute, it had figured, one cannot guess.

In a moment, at the bidding of new lords of the soil, the rough old things of simple beauty are demolished; replaced by something spick, span, and new. One almost wishes the good fairies would take away in the night the well-dressed stones and build up again that queer old cobble belfry; one would forgive the parish

clerk, if next Sunday he should be found as his fore-elder in the office at Wythburn was once found, "astride of the roof-ridge waiting to give the 'third ring' to call the worshippers to prayer." On asking that clerk of the olden time why he was perched roof-high, his answer to the Wythburn priest was, "O Sir, Jemmy Hawkrigg brak yan o' his car reapps tudder day i' t' hayfield, and they gat t' bell reapp an's forgotten to bring 't back ageàn, seah I've been fworst to git up on t' riggin and ring wi' my hands, and I thowt it was neah use comin' doun ageàn between times and I'se stoppan to give t' third round and than I'se be wi' ye."¹

The latest bit of modern Manchester improvement suggested, is the pulling down of that old "Horse-Head Inn" just opposite the church. No matter if Keats slept there; if Matthew Arnold described it in his poem *Resignation*; if Coleridge and Wordsworth often rested there; if Christopher North joked there. A brand-new hotel will be in keeping with the church bell and the re-arrangement of scenery hereabout; ours is an age of progress and good drains. The sanitary officer of the city has been at work on the Nag's Head drains and has condemned them.

Shades of Gray, and Hartley Coleridge, of Wilson of Ellerray, of Matthew Arnold rise up and protest.² And

¹ *Dickinson's Cumbriana*, p. 175.

² It is only fair to put on record that the Manchester Waterworks Committee, have, we understand, abandoned the idea of pulling down the Horse-Head, and will allow that picturesque group of buildings at Wythburn with its many memories and associations to remain, even though it serves no longer as a House of Call. And it must not be

if the lion of Manchester roars, let the lion of an English Lakeland with its old landmarks unremoved, roar back defiance. Let the sounds of our protest ring on till the sound of falling waters in this vale are silenced. That will not be in a moment, for it is raining hard ; and one can now realise as one gazes across at Harrop Ghyll or back at Birkside Ghyll, and sees Lancey Ghyll leaping in the distance, what a vale of sounding waters this Thirlmere valley is. Ah ! how the streams glisten as they dash toward the lake ; no wonder that when the young boy Ruskin came along under Helvellyn on a rainy day at the age of twelve, he should have described the water breaks upon the hillside thus :

“ Appearing, as brightly they dashed from on high,
Like threads of pure silver which hung from the sky.”¹

forgotten that Manchester was willing, for the quiet and beauty of the Armboth Fell-sides, to have postponed the engineering of the great level road west of the lake till the raising of the water of the lake rendered it necessary.

¹ Ruskin's Poems, *The Ileriad*, “ Helvellyn.”

CHAPTER VIII

WYTHBURN: THE ROCK OF NAMES: BRIDGE-END FARM:
THIRLMERE: FISHER PLACE: VALE OF ST. JOHN:
STONEHOUSE: THE MOOR

HARTLEY COLERIDGE, THE WORDSWORTHS, THE ARNOLDS AT
WYTHBURN: COLERIDGE, WORDSWORTH, DOROTHY AND
MARY HUTCHINSON AT "ROCK OF NAMES": CUM-
BERLAND HOSPITALITY: FABER: ROSSETTI:
SCOTT IN VALE OF ST. JOHN:
RICHARDSON

BUT we are at Wythburn; and it is Sunday, October 8, 1769. And the same figure we met, Claude glass in hand, beyond the Raise, is watching the Sunday congregation issuing out of, what he called, the little chapel of Wi'burn. There was then no "Horsehead Inn"; the "Cherry Tree," as famous as the "Famous Swan," was their halfway house.

But here is another little shuffling-gaited man, "untimely old, irreverently grey," who pays for his pint of beer by scribbling a bit of doggerel, or telling a good story. He is "Lile Hartley," well-met again, as before at the Low-

wood Inn. Here, "beneath this little portion of the skies," holy and happy thoughts have risen heavenward from his soul, for with all his faults, there is about him just the meekness and humility which he saw bodied forth by the little chapel across the way, and which he described thus :

"Humble it is and meek and very low,
And speaks its purpose with a single bell,
But God Himself, and He alone doth know
If spiry temples please Him half as well." ¹

I sometimes think that Hartley must have written this after a visit to Keswick. The only spiry temple in this part—the church of St. John's, of which Frederick Myers was the minister—had just been built, and this may have been in his mind. But Hartley is in a fine vein of humour to-day, and he is recounting that excellent story of how, when Wilson of Elleray had come into the Nag's Head one day with a posse of sportsmen, and was just sitting down to table, he had slyly taken his neighbour's gun, and putting the barrel up the chimney, fired at imaginary game with such effect, as to fill the hearts of all at the Nag's Head with alarm, and their eyes and their dinner table with soot, and of how, e'er the smother had passed away, the pealing laugh of Christopher North had made anger impossible.

The folk at Wythburn are rather proverbial for firing up the chimney. Old Dan Birkett, away across the dale, near "the city," was once found with his hand half blown away, because feeling that the fire was getting rather low,

¹ Hartley Coleridge's Poems, *Wytheburn Chapel and Hostel*.

and thinking that it wanted a bit fettling up, he took a powder horn and emptied a charge on the smouldering embers, and was not a little astonished at the result.

But with the presence of Wordsworth and his sister Dorothy and Brother John, come for a day's fishing in the beck and lake, other reminiscences arise of singers who have here sought rest as they journeyed through the country. Here in June of 1818, Keats, writing to his brother Tom, after telling him that he had called on Wordsworth and found him not at home, says, "I wrote a note and left it on his mantelpiece. Thence, on we came to the foot of Helvellyn, where we slept, but could not ascend it for the mist."¹ There is another poet who halted here; he gazes at us from fine eagle face with genial gentle eyes, son of the "Old Eagle" as the name may mean, Arnold, the Poet. Hither he came in July of 1830, a lad of eleven summers. He, and with him his sister the "Fausta" of his poem, of whom he used to speak as "his first and last best critic," his brother Tom, his father, Dr. Arnold, and Captain Hamilton. What a merry party they were! And how they rested, and cracked on with old John Hawkrigg the crippled landlord,—John the giant, for since he lost the use of his limbs by getting overheated in the hayfield and then going as guide without a coat, and overdoing himself on Helvellyn, he had waxed large in all his members.

There are those living still, "ghosts of that boisterous

¹ *Life, Letters, and Literary Remains of John Keats*, by R. Monckton Milnes, Vol. I., p. 153.

company," who remember that walk from Allan Bank, by Wythburn and Armboth, to Watendlath, sixty years ago, who still speak of the fun of it, and the sun of it, the hard task it was to drag young limbs through the high heather upon the Armboth Fells. The impressions of Wythburn that day; the "open lying stores under their burnished sycamores"—of the farm in mid valley; of the low stone bridge across the narrows at Armboth, now submerged beneath the dammed up water flood; of "the cheerful silence of the fells" as they passed across to Watendlath, were to win immortality of verse. And we who to-day read Matthew Arnold's tender poem, *Resignation*, which he published in the *Strayed Reveller* in 1849, and pause beside the Nag's Head at Wythburn, can mount the bank which the Highway Authorities of the Cumberland Council have carefully preserved by the old seat, can survey the scene which the Arnolds saw—or so much of it as is not blocked out by the lodging house hard by—can, in fancy, hear again the cheery voice of jovial John Hawkkrigg—and be in heart with that happy band of mountaineers, whose family name England will not soon forget.

The wayside stone, by the rude bench, lately erected to the memory of Matthew Arnold, may remind us of the words of the poem :

"We left, just ten years since, you say,
That wayside inn we left to-day.
Our jovial host, as forth we fare,
Shouts greeting from his easy chair.
High on a bank our leader stands,
Reviews and ranks his motley bands,

Makes clear our goal to every eye—
The valley's western boundary."¹

One almost sees Dr. Arnold, with all his headmaster's power to direct and guide, in business-like manner pointing out the way:

"And now, in front, behold outspread
Those upper regions we must tread!
Mild hollows, and clear heathy swells,
The cheerful silence of the fells."²

It was well for us that the mother of the Poet kept a journal in those days, otherwise we should never have known so certainly that the brave walkers not only crossed the Fells to Watendlath and thence passed to Keswick, but that they put the best leg forward and got as far as Cockermouth. There they must surely have hired some conveyance, and so actually got to Whitehaven on that night, but wearied and foredone with the long journey across the littoral plain "parched and road-worn," with the "many a mile of dusty way," they still had heart to go down to the sea shore. So at least the Poet, upon whom that walk made an ever memorable impression, tells us:

"But Fausta! I remember well
That as the balmy darkness fell
We bathed our hands with speechless glee
That night in the wide-glimmering sea."³

We go upon our way; no longer can we call, as the "Waggoner" called, for rest and refreshment at Matthew

¹ *Arnold's Poetical Works, Resignation.*

² *Idem.*

³ *Idem*, p. 55.

Jopson's "Cherry Tree." The sound of the fiddle is hushed and the joy of the "Merry neet" is no more. Other poets have doubtless halted at this little wayside public house. Hither came on Tuesday, Aug. 23, 1823, Sir Walter Scott and Lockhart under the guidance of Wilson of Ellerae and Wordsworth, Wordsworth "spouting his poems grandly" all the way. How gladly would we have joined the "boisterous company" of the Arnolds, or the sonorous company of the reciter of Rydal and his guest Sir Walter, *en route* to visit the Laureate at Greta Hall.

But I never pass along the new road above the homely little cottage and barn in one, without remembering the satisfaction that beamed upon the quaint old rambler, "Budworth's," face when having partaken there, at the beginning of last century, of a good square meal of mutton, ham, eggs, butter-milk-whey, tea, bread, butter and cheese, he found the bill for his breakfast amounted to 7d. Nor can we forget how at the "Cherry Tree" young Charles Gough would oftentimes, during his fishing visits there, entertain his host and his host's way-faring guests with recitations from the poets that he loved.

We have now reached the little cairn perched on a boulder rock above the road, just beyond the "Straining Well" for the Manchester water-conduit. The cairn, carefully built, contains only the fragments of certain letters, which are all that we are able to save from the cruel blasting powder of the contractor who wished to quarry the "Rock of Names" for material to make the water-dam. There, by the old road just beneath us,

had stood, carefully guarded by the moss and lichen, unknown save to the readers of the bard, that memorial of the tryst of the poets. For they were all poets who wrought their initials painfully upon the hard volcanic ash, and graved upon the "rock's smooth breast," letters

"That once seemed only to express
Love that was love in idleness."¹

Wordsworth, the tallest of the party, cut his initials highest up, W. W. Next to him, because she loved him so, were wrought out the initial letters of the maiden name of his late affianced bride, M. H. She has a face that bears a kind of family likeness to the poet's, as much for its weakness as its strength. High brow, long cheeks, well arched eyebrow, and eyes darker of hue than his own. One of these has a slight cast in it, but the mouth is full of tenderness. It is a sweet face, "There never lived on earth," wrote Dorothy Wordsworth, "a better woman than Mary Hutchinson."² One who knew her in later age, said that "she brought into Wordsworth's life an element of repose and stability and intellect less brilliant and stimulating than Dorothy's, with nature less highly strung, was gifted with a good sense and wisdom, and loving fidelity which proved to be the constant blessing of his life." But here at the "Rock of Names" to-day, this Creature

"not too bright or good
For human nature's daily food"³

¹ See Note to *The Waggoner*, p. 800.

² Knight's *Life of Wordsworth*, Vol. I., p. 342.

³ *She was a Phantom of Delight*, p. 205.

is happy beyond words. The dominant expression of her face is to-day what De Quincey described it as being, "a sunny benignity." The clouds may roll over Helvellyn but nothing can put out that sun. The "Rock of Names" may sink beneath the waterflood or fall a prey to a contractor's quarryman, but her name is graven on a rock that shall last for ever, the Rock of Love. And underneath the initials of Mary Hutchinson came the letters D. W. Below and close to Dorothy Wordsworth's name was written the initials of the man who, more than any other, Wordsworth excepted, honoured and understood Dorothy, Samuel Taylor Coleridge. It was for his sake that the tryst was held here, he was then living at Keswick; and hither, in the Spring of 1800, I believe he came not once or twice, but many a time to delight in the flashing of those wild eyes of Dorothy's, and the flashing of the soul's wit and wisdom that enlightened them.

"She is a woman indeed! in mind I mean, and in heart, for her person is such that if you expected to see a pretty woman, you would think her ordinary; if you expected to see an ordinary woman, you would think her pretty; but her manners are simple, ardent, impressive. In every motion her most innocent soul out-beams so brightly, that who saw her would say, 'Guilt was a thing impossible with her.' Her information various. Her eye watchful in minutest observation of nature; and her taste a perfect electrometer."¹ We turn away from the bronze-faced, gipsy-looking, intelligent

¹ Cottle's *Early Recollections*, Vol. I., 252.

face of Dorothy, and gaze for a moment at the man who has just spoken, and Dorothy's first impressions of the poet she met at Racedown in 1797, come to mind. "He is a wonderful man. His conversation teems with soul, mind, and spirit. Then he is so benevolent, so good-tempered and cheerful, and, like William, interests himself so much about every little trifle."¹

That is true to-day, for Coleridge has just been adjuring Wordsworth to deepen the cross cutting of the crosses or middle strokes in his capital W. W., and the bard has taken Coleridge's penknife and is hard at work as may be seen by a reference to Dorothy's Journal under date May 4, 1802.

But to continue Dorothy's description: "At first I thought him very plain, that is for about three minutes. He is pale, thin, has a wide mouth, thick lips, and not very good teeth, longish, loose-growing, half-curling, rough, black hair. But if you hear him speak for five minutes, you think no more of them. His eye is large and full, and not very dark, but grey, such an eye as would receive from a heavy soul, the dullest expression; but it speaks every emotion of his animated mind; it has more of the 'poet's eye in a fine frenzy rolling' than I ever witnessed. He has fine dark eyebrows and an overhanging forehead."²

"A noticeable Man with large grey eyes,
And a pale face that seemed undoubtedly

¹ Knight's *Life of Wordsworth*, Vol. I., p. 112.

² *Idem*.

As if a blooming face it ought to be ;
Heavy his low-hung lip did oft appear,
Deprest by weight of musing Phantasy ;
Profound his forehead was, though not severe.”¹

We look across now, at the third of the group. The tall, somewhat gaunt-faced, almost horse-faced, weather-beaten man, with lack-lustre hazel grey eyes that are not large but changing in their light and tone ; full forehead, large nose and mouth of much meaning ; he is William Wordsworth. Beautiful are his teeth by contrast with Coleridge’s, and his hair is light brown of hue. To-day “as happy as a lover” does he seem. He does not often smile, but when he does, it is like sunshine from behind a thunder cloud, and he smiles to-day :

“For happier soul no living creature has
Than he had, being here the long day through.
Some thought he was a lover, and did woo.”²

They were right, for Mary Hutchinson, to whom he had just been engaged in the Spring of 1800, and to whom he is to be married on the 4th October, 1802, is as aforesaid of the party.

Yet there is that in Wordsworth’s face that makes one feel that he is old beyond his years, “a withered flower-like” look in his pale and somewhat faded cheek, of which he must have been conscious, when he wrote those self-descriptive stanzas in his pocket-copy of Thomson’s *Castle of Indolence*,—a premature expression of old age that once made a coaching passenger say to

¹ Stanzas written in Thomson’s “*Castle of Indolence*,” p. 183.

² *Idem*.

Wordsworth, "You'll never see threescore I'm of opinion," and when the Poet told him his real age and that he was but thirty-nine, rapped out, "God bless me, so then after all you'll have a chance to see your children get up like and get settled, only to think of that!" It was in fact this "look of bloom killed before its time," that made all the Dalesmen speak of Wordsworth, as "auld Wadsworth," long before he had seen sixty summers. But what a tall man he is; "reglar Cumberland yeoman mak" as we should say. One does not wonder that Coleridge felt, as he tells us, "a little man by his side."

What a trysting place of friends this "Rock of Names" is! "We are three people," wrote Coleridge once from Racedown, "but only one soul." They are three to-day, the one soul binds them into closest harmony. And there they sit upon the wall, seeing the sun go down and the reflection in the still water. Coleridge looks well, and parts from them cheerfully, "hopping," as Dorothy tells us, "upon the side stones." It was not always that he parted in such good spirits from "Sara's rock" or "Sara's seat" as they used to call this spot, after Dorothy and Coleridge, in October 1801, built up the rough stones at the foot of the rock into a wayside seat. For one finds such an entry in Dorothy's Journal as this in the autumn of the same year: "Poor C. left us, and we (that is Mary Hutchinson and Dorothy) came home together."

But other poets' names are on the Rock, for John Wordsworth and Sara Hutchinson had all the poet's feeling within their souls, and they too laboured with



ROCK OF NAMES (FROM PAINTING).

the penknife; he, the sailor, perhaps, with more skill than they all. At least one infers that brother John, whose visits to Thirlmere are often noted during his stay at Dove Cottage from the end of January to September 27, of 1800, is responsible for the initials J. W. It is impossible to believe, had it been otherwise, that Wordsworth would have written the lines descriptive of the company of stone gravers:

“Meek women, men as true and brave
As ever went to a hopeful grave:
Their hands and mine when side by side,
With kindred zeal and mutual pride,
We worked until the Initials took
Shapes that defied a scornful look.”¹

It was with the sorrow of that brave sailor's untimely end heavy upon him that Wordsworth wrote the poem entitled *The Rock of Names*; and pathetic it is to think of the power the Rock had to console and comfort:

“Long as for us a genial feeling
Survives, or one in need of healing.
The power, dear Rock, around thee cast,
Thy monumental power shall last
For me and mine!”²

We, who after ninety years of sacred trust, see the old Rock of healing blown to shivers, though it be set up again in its poor mutilated fragments, may well feel the powerlessness of

“The light that never was on sea or land,
The consecration, and the Poet's dream,”³

¹See note to *The Waggoner*, p. 800.

²*Idem.*

³*Lines on Peel Castle*, p. 217.

to give our world-blinded souls light, and to preserve the wayside shrine of the poets, a sanctuary for high thought and inspiring association still.

There are few literary associations with Dalehead Hall, but the Lake *literati* of Southey's day not unfrequently repaired thither for happy converse with one another, and with the hospitable genial host, Mr. Leathes of Leatheswater. Let us to-day ascend the great How hard by, and gaze down into the vale; for it was to this dale that the folk of the neighbouring valleys resorted for their law or "lug" or "leag," hence giving the name of Legberthwaite.¹

We shall at a glance take in a scene, memorable for having given Dorothy Wordsworth one of the happiest days of her life, when she and Wordsworth and S. T. Coleridge picnicked together on the banks of the river Bure, just where it leaves the lake, then slipping through the most beautiful brake of hazel and oak and tangle of underwood imaginable, at the place that is now all solid wall and dam-masonry, concrete and "plums," as the workmen call the great blocks they let down into the soft matrix of Portland cement.

"We rested upon a moss-covered rock rising out of the bed of the river," says Dorothy Wordsworth, under date May 4, 1802. "There we lay, ate our dinner, and stayed till about four o'clock or later. William and Coleridge repeated and read verses. I drank a little

¹A rock forming an elevated platform above a level space of greensward by the shore of the lake was known as the Justice Stone down to our day.

brandy and water, and was in heaven. The stag's horn is very beautiful and fresh, springing upon the fells; mountain ashes, grow. We drank tea at a farm-house."¹ I suppose that farm-house was the Bridge-End one of to-day. Most picturesque of ancient statesman dwellings it appears with its solitary Scotch fir, with its fine old barn and carding room, and long overhanging eaves, where the wool spinner could work, and the wool could hang, and the yarn and fleeces feel the mountain air.

But that farm-house to me is interesting as having loaded De Quincey's memory with a double mystery which he bequeathed, as he tells us, "to the carnal curiosity of the twentieth century." At the gate that leads into the Farm from the high road, on a certain day in November, 1807, Southey parted with Wordsworth and De Quincey who had just paid his first visit to Greta Hall and made the Laureate's acquaintance; and a year or two later, Wordsworth and De Quincey found themselves hard by this farm-house without food and very hungry, having breakfasted at Grasmere in very early hours. They "agreed to 'sorn' upon the goodman of the house, whoever he might happen to be, Catholic or Protestant, Jew, Gentile or Mahometan, and to take any bone he would toss to such hungry dogs as ourselves."² They knocked and a "Man-Mountain" opened the door benignantly, gave them audience, and ushered them to his parlour.

¹ Knight's *Life of Wordsworth*, Vol. I., p. 313.

² *De Quincey's Works*, "Literary Reminiscences," Chap. IV.

For the space of two hours all sorts of refreshments were showered upon them, but the master of the house refused to appear. The thought suggested itself, that, perhaps he was a hostel keeper and this cottage in so solitary a place was a *bonâ-fide* inn minus a sign, and that they ought to pay their shot. But what if this host were only after all exercising the rights and duties of Cumberland hospitality? To go off without paying, if he were an innkeeper, would make the refreshed ones swindlers: to offer payment if he were not, would be an insult; never was such a dilemma since the foundation of Legberthwaite. De Quincey adds, "The crisis had now arrived, and we perspired considerably, when in came the frank Cumberland lass who had been our attendant. To her we propounded our difficulty—and lucky it was we did so, for she assured us that her master was an awful man, and would have brained us both if we had insulted him with offer of money."¹ Some years later, De Quincey, on one of the deadly cold nights of a black March frost, pacing along the moonlit road in a keen North wind, drew near to the gate of his huge, hospitable and awful friend, and found the giant seated in an arm chair in the midst of his little garden patch, not at all clad for the weather, but positively in his shirt sleeves, mooning himself, or sunning himself by the light of the moon. The queer sight was too much for De Quincey, who, fearing lest he should be brained by this more than human being, did not so much as stammer out his thanks for favours past, but pursued in silence his

¹ *De Quincey's Works*, "Literary Reminiscences," Chap. IV.

solitary way. This was the way of hospitality in the Cumberland dales in 1807. It is still the way of hospitality at some Legberthwaite farm-houses in the year of grace 1893, as I can attest from personal knowledge: would that it were true of all farm-houses Lakeland over! The summer lodgers from a distance have much to answer for, in subverting the ancient spirit of free-handed hospitalities to the chance wayfarer, to the more commercial one of "pay and get."

As we gaze across at the Raven Crag, "black as a storm," we can see the lofty purple bastion, "in his glorious wild solitude, standing up, its own self and its shadow below, one mass, all else sunshine," as Dorothy Wordsworth saw it, "and the buzzard wheeling above it in shape and motion, at this distance, like a great moth." And here, by the side of Thorold's-mere, where once rang the pack-horse bells so merrily, rang also the silver voices of those young Harrison lads, who, with their tutor, Faber, are, at this moment, so we can in fancy see, striking through the woodland toward Will House or "Willie How." So like is the elder man to one of his charges, Richard, that he spoke of him in 1840 as his "little facsimile." To-day the boys can make nothing of Faber. Generally so full of spirits and geniality, Faber is to-day sad at heart, as anyone may know who will read the poem entitled *Thirlmere*.

"All hope, all joy, all mortal life with such
Sweet sadness is inlaid."

So sings the writer of that poem. Has the Poet had some bitter disappointment? It looks like it. "Some fall in love

with voices, some with eyes," he wrote, under date, Keswick, August 3, 1838.

“Still those blue eyes
Looked at me through my sleep!”

“I cannot think
Save in another heart, I cannot drink
Of my own fountains but in others' eyes.”

Have the blue eyes that so bewitched him turned out to be the eyes of a merry mocker, or are they closed in death? Who can tell?

But something has happened since Faber was first at Thirlmere side, and the world is changed for him.

“I have been here before, yet scarce can tell
The outline of the hills;
The light is changed—another voice doth swell
In these wild-sounding rills.

“I have been here before, in sun and shade
A blythe green place it seemed;
Here have I talked with friends, sweet songs have made,
And lovely things have dreamed.

“And I have ridden to the lake this day
With more than common gladness;
But hill and flood upon me strangely weigh
With new and fearful sadness.”¹

Faber! yours is not the only soul that has been sad by Thirlmere side. There was a time when the poet and the painter, the lover of the fields and of the woods, came hither and found this fair shore, with its little rippling bays

¹ Faber's Poems, *Thirlmere*, p. 233.

and blossoming capes, a perfect paradise of song and flower; of peace that was as old as the hills.

“In sun and shade
A blythe green place it seemed.”¹

But the thirst of a great city far away must needs be quenched, and the woodman has come and cut away the tall dark trees and hazel undergrowth, and the mason has built a fortress wall against the rising anger of the water-flood. Henceforth neither painter nor poet will come for rest and song, where the pack-horse bells at far intervals were once

“The only sound that dared intrude
Upon this sylvan solitude.”

But let us turn our faces from Raven Crag to look at the brow of Helvellyn, tawny to-day in the winter sunlight, as ever lion's mane was tawny. Yellow moorland “Giall-Melin,” well wert thou named! There, by the Scotch firs, gleams the pink stuccoed house of Fisher Place—the Dalehead post-office of to-day. The rosy-cheeked school-boy who, when Wordsworth was here, helped to build up the “maen” or cairn on this old How, never thought that his name would have a gift of immortality from the hands of two poets. Yet so it is; for there at Fisher Place, Rossetti found asylum from a world that jarred on his too sensitive ears, and spent a few weeks of the last autumn of his life, in what he called “retirement more absolute than he had met before.” “The scenery,” he wrote from Fisher Place,

¹ Faber's Poems, *Thirlmere*, p. 233.

"is the most romantic and beautiful that can be conceived." To the romance of it, he added, all unconsciously, by the fact that there he read the final proofs and made the last corrections of his last volume of poems; and, as his landlady once told me, made such an impression upon her, by the fine bell-like chanting of the lines as he read them, that to her dying day his voice would be in her ear.

And yet truly the scenery needs no addition of romance. There, like a lion pawing to get free from Helvellyn's side, the Castle Rock is seen, which, guarding as it does the pass into the Vale of St. John—that Lauterbrunnen of our little English Lakeland—is to-day an enchanted hold, whose witchery is due to the wand of the Wizard of the North.

Sir Walter Scott left no record of his visit to the Lakes in 1805. All Lockhart remembered was, that Scott often used to speak "with enthusiastic delight of the reception he met with in the humble cottage which his brother poet then inhabited on the banks of Grasmere." But we may be assured that at least one of the days Scott spent with Wordsworth, was spent hereabout. No one could so have described the Vale of St. John, as you approach the Castle Rock from the Threlkeld end, as Scott did describe it in his poem, *The Bridal of Triermain*, without having walked down it with the careful eyes of a poet and historian. Nor is it at all likely that Scott, who never passed through Penrith without a peep at the "Giant's Grave" there, would come into this part of Cumberland without a visit

to the Druid Circle on the rising ground beyond the northern end of Naddle,¹ or Nathdale Fell as he knew it.

But it is probable that this visit in 1805 was not the first that Scott had made to the Vale of St. John. He visited the English Lakes first as a gay young bachelor of twenty-six, in the year 1797. We know that he then saw Carlisle, Penrith, the Vale of Eamont, Maryborough, Brougham Castle, Ullswater, and Windermere; that he then made Gilsland his head-quarters, and thence made excursions to the various scenes described in *The Bridal of Triermain*. It was at Gilsland that he saw, and fell in love at first sight, with Charlotte Charpentier or Carpenter. And it is more than probable that to this enchanted valley he would bring her, whose "form was fashioned as light as a fay's," his young *fiancée*. "For who," says Lockhart, speaking of *The Bridal of Triermain*, "that remembers the circumstances of his first visit to the Vale of St. John" (Lockhart is doubtless referring to the time of Scott's recent engagement) "but must see throughout the impress of his own real romance?"²

Henceforth, when one meets the Wizard of the North by Castle Rock, one will have in mind, no lonely wanderer of middle age, but a young, fair-faced man with a beautiful girl upon his arm, with "a complexion of the clearest and lightest olive; eyes large, deep-set and dazzling, of the finest Italian brown; and a profusion

¹ The Nether Dale, or dale beneath the hill.

² Lockhart's *Life of Scott*, Vol. IV., p. 62.

of silken tresses, black as the raven's wing."¹ Gay she is and archly naïve, with a slight French accent adding an attraction to her voice. "A lovely apparition sent" to be no "moment's ornament," but the bright enchantress bride, of the enchanter of the Vale of St. John. Be that as it may, whoever now comes up St. John's Vale to Legberthwaite, may in mind be with Walter Scott, and remember that he is taking notes for a poem, parts of which he first published in the Register of 1811, under the guise of *Imitations of Walter Scott*, and which, after having won a certain fame for the supposed author, Erskine, who was in the plot, were to be re-published anonymously, simultaneously with *Rokeby*, just for a bit of fun, to lay a trap for Jeffrey, to hear what the reviewers said and to throw out the knowing ones. Ay, and we may also be reminded of Wordsworth's criticism of Scott's method of work, as recorded for us by Aubrey de Vere. "He took pains;" said Wordsworth, "he went out with his pencil and note-book, and jotted down whatever struck him most, the river rippling over the sands, a ruined tower or a rock above it, or a promontory and a mountain-ash waving its red berries. He went home and wove the whole together into a poetical description," and after a pause, Wordsworth would resume with a flashing eye and an impassioned voice, "but nature does not permit an inventory to be made of her charms."

It is interesting to remember that *The Bridal of Triermain* was written by way of relief, to rest Scott's mind when he was engaged upon another poetical work, and that

¹ Lockhart's *Life of Scott*, Vol. I., p. 366.

it advanced *pari passu* with *Rokeby*. Yet all this fades in interest as compared with the fact, that once in the times when the eagles were still seen at intervals over Helvellyn (for Jonathan Otley tells us that the golden eagle bred in Cumberland till 1791; and I have talked with an old man who saw a pair as late as 1836, above "the mountain of the yellow moor"), there came from over the Border to this "narrow valley of St. John" the man with the eagle heart who had made its scenery "with all its unappropriated good," his own.

Another poet since Scott's day has claimed a share of the charm of this his native vale to comfort and inspire the souls of men. A man to whom the

"Hills and crags and hingen woods
With bonnie deals between,"

were a passion as well as a solace; of whom it might truly be said that the valley of St. John "had laid strong hold on his affections," and was to him

"A pleasurable feeling of blind love,
The pleasure that there is in life itself."

As we talk he is at our side. He is well and strongly built. His face is the face of an elderly man who has found the peace that is bred from adversity. Fine open forehead he has, lined with care but most with thought, grey "viking" eyes that have a dreamy far-away look about them; a face solid and reposeful enough, but filled with soul and with benevolence; a mouth that is closely set, except when by a twinkle in the eye, you feel the man has laughter at his heart. He is a true son of Isaac Walton,

and has been fishing all the way up the river Bure from his home, Bridge House,

“That’s shaded in green trees
There in its shelter’t neuk ;”

for he loves playing with the trout, and has “put on time” with a bit of “prickly bass fishing and aw.” And he has fallen into a reverie, as was not infrequent with him there by Thirlmere side ; has left his rod, and an eel or a pike has gone off with hook, bait and tackle, and all, as you may read if you will take up a volume of his *Cumberland Talk* and peep into his *Thowts by Thirlmere*. Who is he? He is “Richardson” the “waller’s” boy, who, born hereabout in 1817, was reared in Stonehouse, now called Piper House, under Naddle Fell, and got all the schooling he had, at the hands of Priest Wilson, at the little upland school. He grew up to follow his father’s trade, built many a house in Keswick, and afterwards reared the walls of the St. John’s Vale Parsonage, St. John’s Vale School and Chapel. Then, partly by reason of lack of health for such labour, he took to the harder task, as “dominie” of the mountain school, of building up the characters of future men and women of the Vale of St. John ; and for twenty-two years was the much respected village schoolmaster. On the last day of April, 1886, he, whose health had been waning for a year, was seen suddenly to fall as he walked slowly down-hill towards his beautiful little home by the side of the Bure. He was borne by tender hands and true, on the following Tuesday afternoon, up the hill to be laid at rest almost within hearing of the patter of the children’s feet and sound

of the children's voices; the last but not least of the Cumberland poets of the present century.

The vision fades; we leave the "Barrow of the Law" and down into the main road we go, by the clanging quarry and the jangling tramway of the Manchester Waterworks; we look back disconsolate at the remains of the beautiful bridge, whose arches have been removed by order of the Corporation, beneath Bridge-End House; thence sad, but half glad that John Richardson the poet-schoolmaster, who loved this valley as he loved his life, was spared the sight of the necessary change, we determine to visit, for Richardson's sake, the house he dwelt in beneath the fell, the little church he rebuilt on the mountain pass, the little school close by, where he got his education in the good old days "a gay good bit sen," where first he wrought and afterwards he taught.

"Paled in by many a lofty hill,
The narrow dale lay smooth and still,
And, down its verdant bosom led,
A winding brooklet found its bed."¹

So says Sir Walter. We will take his brooklet for a guide, brooklet beloved of the otter and the trout, and at every turn and twist of its beautiful course, we may in thought be with John Richardson. Beneath the hill, protected from the winds, we shall find his cottage much as he describes it. Simply bred, he lived to the end of his days in sturdy independence of spirit, but with absolute modesty both of manner and of wants, and having few things—home, work, wife and bairns, a bit of garden ground,

¹ Scott's Poems, *Bridal of Triermain*, Canto I., Stanza 13.

a good conscience, and the exquisite beauty of the vale and hill to quicken and inspire, with a few good standard books close to hand—was therewithal content. Of him it might be truly said :

“ Remote from towns, he ran his godly race,
Nor e’er had changed, nor wished to change his place.”

We can none of us be too grateful to Richardson for his accurate account of Old Cumberland “wayses” and doings, as given us in *T’barring oot, What used to be Lang Sen, A Crack about Auld Times*, his *Stwories at Granny used to tell*, which he got first-hand from his wife’s mother, Mrs. Birkett of “Wythburn City,” an old lady who lived to be ninety-five. But for Richardson, we should not have known about the “auld fashint weddins and buryins,” “auld fashint farmers,” or “sec winters as they hed lang sen,” and the early days of the last century, as far as the country through which we have come to-day is concerned, would have been a sealed book. As a humourist, to whom can one turn for more truthful and yet amusing pictures of life and character among yeomen and shepherds of the dales, than to such prose sketches as *Willie Cooband an’ his Lawsuit*, *Jemmy Stubb’s Grunstone*, *Auld Willie Bowness Fwok an’t Hare*, *Tommy Dobson’s Toor to t’ Lakes*, *Coming Home Sober*, *The Cockney in Mosedale*, *Auld Gwordie Thompson*, *Auld Will Rutson’s Machine?* The Cumberland “todhunter” in general, will not easily let die the music of such a hunter’s song as *John Crozier’s Tally Ho!* And the memorial poem *Laal Isaac* will keep in memory the par-

ticular "Todhunter" whose Christian name was Isaac, who for a great number of years was the huntsman of the Blencathra pack. Who can read *Auld Gwordie an' his Coo*, or *Nancy's Cure*, *Sneck Posset*, *The Hob-thrush*, without feeling the fun that sparkles in every line? While the pathos of *This love's a curious thing*, *It's nobbut me*, *He hedden't a word to say*, *Lang years sen*, is undeniable.¹

Nor was he only a poet and humourist. John Richardson, fierce to uphold the worth of the native character if ever Cumberland character was wrongly spoken against, who wrote :—

"What, Cumberland fowk, let them gang whoar they will,
 Ur allus respectit an' weel thowt on still;
 And to say 'at they're wicked, it's aw just a farce,
 Ye'll finnd them i' Lunnen a hundred times warse,"²

was nevertheless unsparing in the use of the lash of his tongue for the faults he saw in the yeoman homes around him. *Ill-gien Gossips*, *Oor Betty*, *Grummelin Farmers*, *Tom and Jerry*, *For sham o' the' Mary! ses I*, *Get ower me who can*, *Auld Abram's advice to his son*, *T' plessen o' saavin'*, *A laal bit o' money's a wonderful thing*, are witnesses of Richardson's power to see the weakness, as well as strength, of the characters among these sturdy men of the dales, whom he knew so well, and to whom he held up his mirror of truth.

Here we are at the rustic churchyard of "St. John's, rather upon the Mountain" than "in the Vale." We are standing close to a grassy grave by an old ash tree. On

¹ See *Cumberland Talk*, 1st and 2nd Series, by J. Richardson.

² *Cumberland Talk*, 1st Series, p. 52.

the plain slate headstone, with its simple cross, we read "In loving memory of John Richardson of Bridge House, St. John's in the Vale, who died on the 30th April, 1886, aged 68 years." Here, as we look across the beautiful valley to far Blencathra, or the purple screes of Helvellyn, we wonder whether Nature has ever in these later years shown more conspicuously that she "never did betray the heart that loved her." As we stand by Richardson's grave we feel that we are standing by the resting-place of one who was the creature of the very scene we look upon. As long as for baptismal font, for thirsty wayfarer, or use of village child, the churchyard spring shall flow from the rock hard by, there must flow from this man's tomb in the Naddle rock, a sense of what the mountains can do to

"Make and keep hearts gentle, and inspire
With lofty thought the lowliest of men."

We leave the Poet in his upland, last long sleeping-place, feeling that it was given to few men to find, in his life's surroundings, so much to make that life a noble thing. Hence down by the old school, we pass toward the little house beneath the Naddle Fell, with its queer stairway, its uneven floors, its much-recessed walls, its old-fashioned chimney "neuk," with its quaint "rannel-boke," its tiny window looking to the west, where once to wile away with tune his long imprisonment by snow and storm, the Highland piper, who was inmate there, skirled his pipes and played his reels.

Back we come from the larch grove and Piper House, where the village poet was born, to the field path that strikes across the meadows and the Naddle beck and takes

us to the main high road beneath "Pyat's Nest." The pathway brings us out half-way up the hill that climbs from the Causeway Foot the Romans knew, to the Moor and Castlerigg where they held their camp. Let us go forward by the Moor Farm to the brow of the hill that descends into Keswick. Then, at the place that caused the poet Gray to pause years ago and take his long backward view, let us pause also. The glorious panorama of lake and river and plain is once more spread out beneath our feet: "a banner suddenly unfurled between us and the sun." We have left Wordsworth country, we are back in Southey-land again.

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